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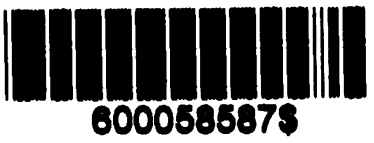
CHIT CHAT

BY

PUCK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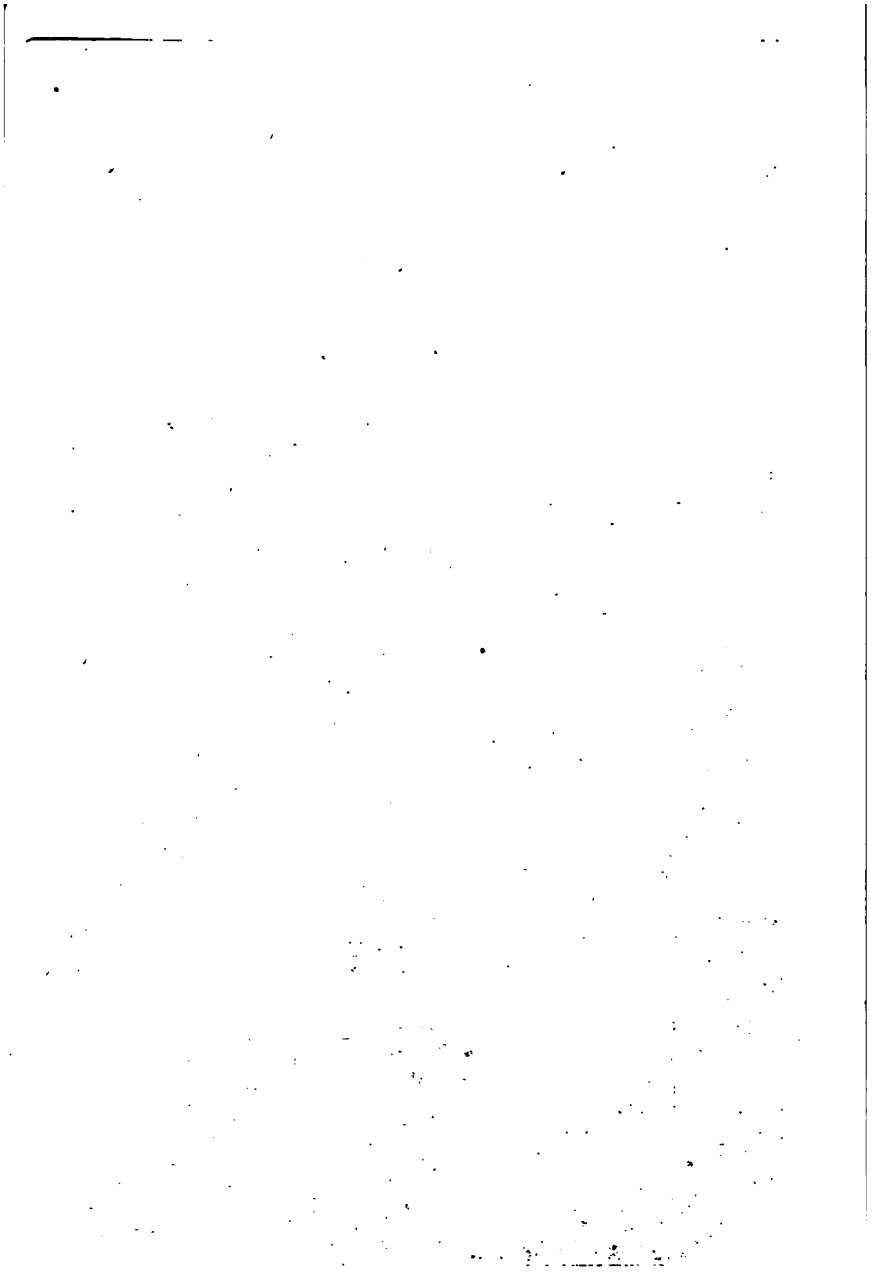

SAMPLE

CHIT-CHAT BY PUCK.

Tea-Time Tales for Young Little Folks and Young Old Folks.

FROM THE SWEDISH OF

RICHARD GUSTAFSSON,

BY

ALBERT ALBERG,

WITH

Twenty-six Vignettes, and a Frontispiece by Mary Sibree.

LONDON:
W. SWAN SONNENSCHEIN & ALLEN,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1880.

251. g. 423

TO

MARY HOWITT

THIS TRANSLATION IS

WITH DEEPEST RESPECT

Dedicated,

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF

THE LOVE THAT SWEDEN BEARS HER.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IT is considered that a few words of introduction are called for in a collection of translated tales, such as the accompanying, as original English children's books already exist in ample abundance for all demands. It has been found both in Sweden, their home, and in Germany, where they have emigrated to, that the tales of Richard Gustafsson have afforded incessant pleasure to young folks, on account of both their freshness and their delicacy of conceit—two most desirable qualities in a book for children, who, after all, are very often as shrewd and exacting critics as their elders. The author of these stories is eminently skilful as a child's tale-teller—he unites true simplicity of diction with a vigorous style, and inculcates a

genuine, healthy morality, yet giving at the same time a wide berth to the nauseous infliction upon the child of the cut-and-dried morality so common in their story-books.

The translation has been entrusted to Mr. Albert Alberg, who has throughout striven to maintain the true spirit of the original.

With these words of recommendation—more we consider are not needed—we commit this book to the hands of an intelligent and child-loving public.

W. S. S. & A.

LONDON, *November*, 1879.

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The Children's Little Story-Book.

IN the great city of London, in a big house with beautiful ornaments over the windows, there lived a young merchant. Everywhere in the house there was only splendid new furniture to be seen, and all the floors were covered with soft and beautiful carpets—red, blue, and green—and with a profusion of woven flowers strewn over them, so that you might almost have fancied you were treading a meadow on a summer's day, with all the little buttercups and daisies at your feet.

In a little room in this house there stood an antique bookcase, of walnut-wood, with small old-fashioned panes of glass, held together by a richly-carved framework—and on the shelves were arrayed several rows of books, faded and worn.

Many of the young merchant's friends pointed to the old bookcase, and said: "Why do you keep such an ugly old piece of lumber?" But he always answered: "It is an heir-loom of my mother's, and

she begged me to keep it in remembrance of olden times."

Still the young man himself never cared to read anything in the old shabby books, because he had in his study an elegant modern bookcase, with a large number of new books, and in them he would read when he happened to be in the mood.

One day the merchant, accompanied by his old housekeeper, went to the little, old-fashioned bookcase, and told her: "Now, Kate, you must take all these books, and send them to the bookbinder; he must make them all as handsome as possible—new coverings, with gold impressions on the backs."

"Oh, dear me, why must the old missus' books be made so fine now?" the housekeeper inquired.

"Well you see, Kate, my mother often told me, that when one day I would marry I was to make my wife a present of the bookcase and all the books, on our wedding-day; the books would bring a mother's blessings with them, she said. I promised her to do so, and, of course, I will keep my word, but I cannot very well present my future wife with the books as they now look, and that's the reason why the bookbinder must make them as handsome as he can."

When the books heard this they felt very glad that such sudden good fortune should have befallen them as to be brought forth into the world anew—and that's not to be wondered at, for they had now remained on the same shelves for many years, without anybody caring for them, except, may be, old Kate, who

glanced furtively at their backs, whilst she was dusting them.

"I hope she won't forget to take me away too," said a little book, which had fallen down behind the shelves, and in the mishap had had one of its covers torn away.

"You had better remain where you are," interpolated, with aristocratic condescension, an historical novel, which was very proud of its pedigree, for it was all about a king and queen, and consequently had royal blood in its veins.

"'Tis only we celebrities that are to have our names printed in gold by the bookbinder," apostrophized a book of poetry, that considered itself the greatest in the whole collection—though long ago out of date. Many of its leaves were dog's-eared, but it now hoped they would become straightened.

"At least one ought to be of some use in this world," gurgled the cookery-book, and gave herself an air of superiority at the mere thought of all the delicious things she could offer to the world.

The children's little story-book—for it was just such a one that had dropped behind the shelf—had not a word to say, for it was modest, and knew it was best to hold its tongue in such distinguished company. But it thought to itself, "It *would* be dreadful, if I should not be allowed to accompany the others, to get a new cover, if ever so plain."

At that moment Kate returned, and brought the porter with her, who carried a large basket. All the books were put into it. The historical novel,

the poems, the cookery-book, and all the others arranged on the shelves were placed, one on the top of another—but the children's little story-book remained dangling there without being noticed. It was nearly choking, poor little thing, when the porter went away with the basket, and it would have liked to have cried, but it could not produce a tear, for it was as dry as parchment, what with the dust and neglect of many years.

"Nay see, there is still one left, dangling there," Kate ejaculated, as she saw the little book, whilst dusting the bare shelves. "Well, it did not matter if that thing went with the others or not. I will put it in my pocket, and take it up to my room; it may be of some use." And so she put the children's little story-book into her pocket.

The next night the story-book was lying in old Kate's chest of drawers, but it could get no rest, for it was for ever thinking of the other books that were allowed to be taken to the bookbinder, and were expected to be presented to the young bride on her wedding day. The little thing was quite in despair, thinking it would not be allowed to be in the antique bookcase, from where it might have had such a good view of the young bride, who was said to be very pretty. She would feel glad of the newly bound books, and read them all, while the little story-book, with its old and torn cover, very likely was destined for but a sorry future.

"I must tell all this to old Kate, who, without permission, has taken me away from the bookcase,"

thought the little story-book. And as it was thinking the leaves in the book began to stir. All the fabulous heroes marched forward, and halted before the bedstead, where old Kate was lying asleep. Birds and butterflies circled around the pillows; toads and frogs were leaping over each other at her feet; and lizards and serpents writhed about on the counterpane. The book emptied all its legendary contents of goblins, men, and animals—and they were all alive on the quilt, and on the floor around old Kate, who was still sleeping. There was such a rustling noise that it was really unbearable, but still the old woman did not wake—she only moved uneasily, tormented in her sleep.

When Kate rose the following morning and saw the story-book, she groaned and said: "Heaven defend me from having you here another night!" so she took the book with her when she went down stairs to dust the rooms. But as the leaves were so sadly torn and worn she did not care to send it to the bookbinder, or place it on the shelves, but just put it back again, exactly as before—behind one of the shelves, hanging by its ragged old cover.

"There you may hang, and frighten people with your goblins, just as you like, you little wretch!" old Kate said, and went away.

Soon the newly-bound books returned home, and they were all so stiff and starched in their backs, and had got such splendid new clothing! Some of them were purple, others blue, green, or brown, and all had golden embellishments, and high-sound-

ing titles—so that everybody might see what grand folks they were.

"'Tis only nobodies that are without a title," said the historical novel.

"'Tis true. But if one has a titled name, and some starch in the back, and gold-stitched clothing, the world takes notice that one is not of the common lot," added the poems.

When all the books were arranged in a splendid show, and they got a sight of the little story-book, they all laughed at once "at the poor thing that could not even show a respectable coat."

An old novel that was nearest to it complained of "bad company," and hoped that the young mistress would soon observe the disgraceful waif, and turn it out of their house.

The day after the wedding, the merchant took his young wife into the little room where the bookcase stood. She clapped her hands with delight, and said joyously: "Why, look at auntie's old bookcase!"

"Yes, my mother wished that I should make a wedding present of it to my wife, and now 'tis yours, sweet Mary," he said.

"Oh, your mother knew that one day I should become your wife. Often when I sat with her, and read in her books, she used to say: 'When you, Mary, and your cousin Adolphus are married, you will think of me when you take a book from that bookcase."

"So we will, my dear."

"But these, surely, are not your mother's old books?"

"I have had them done up and rebound for you, Mary."

"That was a pity. I should have known them better if they had remained as they were."

This, the gorgeous books thought very stupidly spoken; but the heart of the little story-book beat for very joy; tic, tac, tic, tac, and it would so have liked to call out: "Here I am, as jolly as ever!" but it dared not speak, so nobody observed it.

The time that now arrived was one of incessant pleasures and great happiness for the young wife, so she quite forgot the old bookcase and its contents. But this happy time did not last very long, for soon the young husband began to go alone to public places of amusement, and Mary felt very lonely in the big house. Then she would sometimes go to the old bookcase, and take down a book to read, and in so doing she would sigh so despondently that it cut the little story-book to the very heart. Late one night she came with a lamp to look at the titles, but none seemed to please her. At last she took down the old novel, the neighbour of the story-book, when the light fell upon the torn old cover that was hanging down behind the shelf, and she said: "Which one can that be, that has fallen down behind?" With her slender fingers she gently liberated the little story-book, and brought it forth to the table. There she opened it, and her eyes were beaming with joy. "Oh, it is you, little darling, friend of my childhood," she whispered, and kissed the crumbled leaves of the book, and the balmy kisses restored memory to the little story-

book, so that it now perfectly well remembered her when she was a little girl, who used to come to her old aunt, and would always ask her to show her the pictures in the story-book. She was now no longer a child, but her eyes were the same as before, and by them the little story-book recognized her.

During the whole night the lady did nothing but read in the little torn book, to the great annoyance of all the stuck-up books, that from afar beheld all the caresses the lady of the house abundantly bestowed on the dear friend of her childhood.

"She has no taste," gurgled the cookery-book.

"She aims not at a spiritual life," affectedly spoke a sanctimonious thick volume.

"You can't expect any poetical feelings in the wife of a merchant," sneered the poems, and looked awfully aristocratic.

Every one of the books had different spiteful remarks to make, and they all agreed that "it was a great shame that they should be put aside for that ridiculous thing." The only one which ventured upon a remonstrance was a little hymn-book, which said: "Kind friends, perhaps you are not altogether in the right, for real worth lies in the heart, and not in appearance."

The young lady of the house had no eyes for anything but the little story-book of her childhood. She read one story after another, and sometimes she would smile, and sometimes a tear would glisten in her eye. Sometimes she would fancy she still was a little girl,

sitting on a stool, at the feet of her old aunt, when she used to feel so happy; but then she would remember that happiness had already forsaken her in her married life, and big tears would trickle down her cheeks. Suddenly she lit upon a page in the book where it said:

> "If fate is severe in the trials of life,
> Call to mind that with faith and true love,
> Howe'er great the toil of the troublous strife,
> If not here, we find sure joy above."

"Yes, yes, I feel it to be so," she softly whispered, and smiled through her tears. When she retired to rest she put the little book under her pillow, and that night she had happy and beautiful dreams.

One day the merchant came home, looking very pale. He usually locked himself in his room when he was in a bad humour, but now he remained sitting in the parlour, covering his face with his hands.

Mary took heart, and went to him: "Adolphus, do tell me this once, what it is makes you so sad!"

"I can no longer conceal it from you," he answered, quite crushed in spirit, "we are ruined! Nothing remains of our old fortune. Nothing! Do you understand?"

Mary sank down in a chair and cried bitterly; but when her eyes rested upon Adolphus she forgot her own troubles, in trying to comfort her husband.

Shortly after this the young couple had to leave their splendid house in the fashionable part of the

town, and remove to a small humble abode, far out in the suburbs.

All their expensive furniture and carpets were sold at an auction; yes, even the antique book-case, and all the new-bound books were dispersed by the auctioneer's hammer. Only the child's story-book was Mary allowed to keep, for it had "no value," said the appraiser, when making the inventory for the auction.

A few weeks after Adolphus and Mary had removed to their poor new home, a little boy was born to them.

"He brings true happiness with him," whispered Mary to her husband; but he shook his head mournfully.

"Do not doubt," she resumed, "I feel happier now than before, for now I have got you back, and you are my own again, Adolphus."

"But I can give you no happiness now," said Adolphus, sighing.

"Oh yes, you can. Sit down by my side, and take my hand in yours. And now you shall read something for me."

"But I have no book."

"Under my pillow is one I love."

Adolphus took out the little story-book. When he recognized it he quite blushed for shame, for he had not seen it since he was a child, and a thousand unpleasant thoughts from the past crowded upon his memory.

"Open it where the book-mark is," Mary said,

softly. "There is a verse in the middle of the page, read that to me!" Adolphus obeyed her, and read aloud with a slightly trembling voice:

> "If fate is severe in the trials of life,
> Call to mind that with faith and true love,
> Howe'er great the toil of the troublous strife,
> If not here, we find sure joy above."

"It is the voice of our dear mother speaking to us again," Mary said, and smiled. "Do you now believe he brings happiness with him?" she asked, and pointed to the little baby in the cradle.

"Yes, I believe it," he answered meekly, and knelt by her side, kissing both his wife and his child.

Such a happy moment the little story-book had never experienced before; it felt so jolly that it bounced on the table and tumbled down on the floor. But though it did not hurt itself, it was immediately taken up, and now there were two who loved the simple keepsake of their happy childhood.

From that moment blessings came to them in their new home. It seemed as if new life coursed through the heart and veins of the young father, and he went to his work with ever-increasing zest. The baby was christened "Peter," in affectionate remembrance of a little boy in the story-book who was such a lucky lad. The little story-book itself was treated to fine new purple covers, with golden title both on the sides and on the back, and the edges of the leaves were all gilded, so that when the little story-book was closed it was clear to every one that its contents were as good as real gold. But the

little book did not become conceited for all that; on the contrary, it was with heartfelt delight that it allowed little Peter, as he was growing up, to read all its stories. And any one who will take a delight in gladdening little children's lives is like this little story-book, which had not got an atom of pride in its heart.

Puck Himself.

THE clock in the church-tower was striking midnight, and the lights had been put out in most of the houses; only from a few windows small lights still flickered, and those that were burning in the garrets could, at a distance, scarcely be distinguished from the stars on the dark horizon.

A lamp burned also in the poet's study, for his pen had worked briskly that night, and strange figures had risen one after another out of the inkbottle and insisted on getting abroad in the world.

"Write about the little lady-bird," a voice was heard calling from the inkbottle, and the ink appeared a mixture of black and red.

"About the leeks!" cried another, and immediately a sweet-scented hyacinth grew out of the inkbottle, which took the shape of a flower-pot.

"Write a tale about cherries and berries!" said a third, and the hyacinth was transformed into a little cherry tree with juicy fruits.

Suddenly the window curtains rustled gently, and a little head, with a red cap on, peeped forth.

"To-night I am the one that must say something," said the urchin, and nodded, evidently in good humour.

"And who are you?" the poet asked.

"I have many names, but generally they call me 'Puck.' Every night, when the clock strikes twelve, I begin my journey round the town, and wherever I see a light glimmer I make a call to comfort and help. Often I see things that would be well worth reading about in a book, and that is the reason I make myself visible to you, though I very seldom care to be seen by anybody."

The little fellow now came forward, showing his whole figure, and placed himself astride on one of the ornaments of the writing table. He wore a dark garment, held together with a broad belt, shining as if it were made of burnished gold. He carried a staff in his hand, on the top of which appeared a small bunch of flowers, while the other end was shaped into a sharp, glittering spear.

"Will you accompany me on my route?" said Puck.

"With pleasure; but how about the conveyance?" the poet answered.

"Nothing easier than that. The north wind is my sturdiest steed, and we will ride on it to-night. Take this cap, and you also will become invisible, and small, and lithesome as a feather."

The visitor put the cap on the poet's brow, and all at once they were both carried by the night wind aloft over the roofs of the houses. Below them they only heard the steps of the night watchman, and above them glimmered the stars in boundless space.

"There a light is burning," said Puck, and pointed to a window which gave a faint glimmer. "Here we will enter!"

The next moment they were both seated in a room where a man, downcast and musing, sat leaning against an open piano. A lamp burned dimly on the table, where sheets of partly-written music were strewn pell-mell. Puck glanced at the notes, and said, "The composer seeks for beauty in the spheres of harmony. But he has lost his way, and cannot get out of the maze. I will try and direct him on the right path."

Puck jumped up on the music-stand, and raised his wand over the keys, which in a moment seemed to become endowed with life and became transformed. The white ones became little seraphims with fluttering wings, and the black resembled the white, but were covered with thin black veils, expressive of grief. They all began to fly, sometimes in narrow, sometimes in wider circles. Sometimes they would whirl around as in a capricious storm, and the next moment float dreamily past each other

and join in graceful airy dances of harmony. And from the strings of the instrument poured out sweet melodies, sometimes grand and powerful, sometimes soft and yearning. And the composer, who but a while ago had been downcast and baffled, felt a throb of exquisite joy, and said aloud to himself, "Yes, that was a glorious inspiration!"

"Now we proceed further," said Puck, and they rode out again into the night; but not far, for there was a light in a window quite near. In a fine room a young girl sat sewing a white dress by the light of a lamp. It was a bridal robe, and the girl herself was the happy bride. The portrait of her lover lay before her, and the needle had frequently to stop while the girl took the portrait, looked at it, and kissed it.

"I will make her a wedding gift," said Puck, and raised his wand tipped with the bunch of flowers: "May the blossoms of love always grow around you, and be a source of joy for yourself and those whom you cherish at heart!" And on the moment came quite a shower of red roses from the staff. The girl closed her eyes, smiling, and she inhaled the balmy air, and whispered in her dream, "May I be able to make him as happy as I long to!"

The next window where a light appeared was carefully covered with thick satin curtains, but Puck showed the poet an aperture through which the light poured.

"Here I have often been before, but to no avail. Let us enter," he said.

On a gorgeous bed, surrounded by heavy and elegant curtains, lay a man, who in vain sought the blessings of refreshing sleep. Every time that he closed his eyes a crowd of pale and distressed figures emerged from all the corners of the chamber and stretched forth their arms to him. From the shadowy folds of the bed-curtains haggard faces looked at him, and suppressed sighs and moans filled the air.

"By wicked means has he acquired his wealth, and all these tears of woe come from those whom, heedless of their anguish, he has plunged into misery and despair," said Puck.

"Away, away from me!" cried the rich man, and writhed in agonized slumber. Cold perspiration oozed out on his forehead, and he pressed his hands convulsively against his eyes to drive away the visions. But he only saw them more clearly and distinctly, till at last, with a cry of inexpressible anguish, he awoke to consciousness. "Light, more light!" he cried, and pulled the bell for his servants, who carried into the room candelabra of silver with the candles lit, which they placed on the tables and then disappeared, after first having thrown furtive glances at their wretched master.

"All the lights in the world will not suffice to chase away the dark spectres of conscience from your bed! Repentance and amendment of your wrong-doings alone can save you from them," said Puck, and thrust his staff against the wicked heart; but it clanked as hollow as if he had struck against

resounding metal, and Puck shook his head mournfully when he left the irreclaimable old wretch.

Down in a dark lane a few beams of light glimmered from a window, the panes of which were broken, but mended with long strips of paper pasted over the cracks. Near the casement, on a rickety table, stood a candle, and close to it hung a glass ball filled with water, through which the light shone on a pair of diligent hands at work on a shoe. The poor cobbler was still up working, and every time he felt that his eyelids grew heavy he looked around to the side of the room where his numerous children were lying asleep. He looked for a while at some of the curly little heads that peeped forth from amongst the bed clothes, and he felt that his own eyelids were no longer heavy: he listened to the sound sleep of his dear ones, and felt himself breathing much more easily. And he began with renewed strength again to work to get bread for his loved ones.

"The very best of what I have I will give to him," said Puck, and shook his flowery wand, so that there rained down tiny little blue-bells that filled the air of the room with a refreshing fragrance.

"May the blossoms of contentment always refresh you at your work!" said Puck; and when he and his companion left the dimly-lit chamber they heard the master cobbler humming—

"No riches I've got,
But content with my lot,
With the king I can vie,
Who is happier than I?"

All the lights in the chandeliers were lit in the grand dwelling whither Puck and his companion now directed their course. On the centre of the table in the dining-room were placed two gilded bowls, surrounded by rows of crystal drinking-glasses. Around the table a number of gentlemen in evening dress were gathered, some of whom had glittering stars and ribbons of distinction adorning their coats. The host was an elderly man, with an air of self-sufficiency. He stood at the head of the table ready for action, for now the toasts were about to begin.

"Here I come frequently," said Puck; "the host has gatherings upon all possible occasions, for he loves to hear himself praised in flowery speeches."

"To-night I am to propose his health," one of the guests whispered to another.

"Well, then, I am sure he will get honey enough," answered the other.

"I should think he would! and I have myself written the reply, which the old fool has learned by rote."

"Bravo!"

The speaker begged their attention and began his speech. He descanted upon the great genius of the host, but suddenly, in the midst of his oration, he began to stammer, for Puck had jumped down on the table and was wielding his glittering spear against the orator, so that he forgot what he intended to say, and was unable to continue, notwithstanding that he coughed, brought his glass to his lips, and put his fingers through his hair. Now

and then a suppressed laugh was heard, and the host, in his turn, grew red in the face with mortification and rage. Somewhat to save appearances on this festive occasion the host himself interrupted, and wanted to deliver his reply at once; but Puck then turned his spear towards him, and he could deliver no more than interjections, random words, and break into nervous coughing. There the two speakers stood opposite each other, gesticulating, without being able to utter two words coherently. At last it was impossible to suppress the titters any longer, and all the guests burst into a laughing chorus, and kept on laughing heartily, long after the host and his extoller had rushed off in different directions. But Puck himself laughed the most of all, as he and his companion left the broken-up banqueters to settle their own affairs.

Far up in a garret they next saw a light flickering, so faint that it was scarcely discernible from without, but still the room was quite light. A poor old woman lay ill on a bed, which was but scantily furnished, and at the side of which a youth sat holding the old woman's hands in his own.

"I shall never forget what you have done for me, mother dear," said the youth, whilst tears trickled down his cheek, and fell upon the counterpane, whose faded flowers immediately gained a fresh colour as they got watered by the tears of filial affection.

"What you say is a comfort to me, my dear boy, in death," the mother whispered.

"You have sacrificed everything to smooth the path of life for me; and I promise you that I shall always act so that you may look down with joy upon me from heaven."

"I thank you, my child. One kiss more; it is the last!"

Puck raised the flower-tipped end of his staff, and white flowers dropped down upon the bed, as the soul took wings and left the shattered frame behind. Some of the white flowers fell on the lips of the dead, and when the son kissed his mother they crept down into his heart, where they rooted themselves, to accompany him as protectors in the temptations of life.

"Could you not have let the old woman live some time yet?" the poet asked, when they again floated into airy space.

"Over life and death He commands, who lives beyond the lights up yonder," said Puck, and pointed heavenwards.

"You said you would take me everywhere where the lights shine; well, take me then to the stars, that I may see who or what is living and dwelling up yonder!"

At this request Puck's face darkened, and sparks flashed from his eye.

"Very well, come then," he cried; and as if they had been two arrows straight from the bow they darted heavenwards. The stars grew larger, and earth itself soon looked like a twinkling star. The nearer they approached their goal the more dazzling

became the light that streamed from above, and they were at last compelled to close their eyes, for they could not even endure all the splendour of pure light, which radiates alone from the vestibule of heaven.

"Your request was too daring, and therefore we part now," said Puck, with a severe tone of voice, and tore the cap from off the poet, who in a moment tumbled down to earth, and awoke with a palpitating heart, seated in his arm-chair, with the light of the lamp shining full upon his face.

The Butterfly from the Wood.

IN the summer time, on a pretty little green hill, crested with birchen-trees, there lived a common butterfly with its chosen bride. The little butterfly was white, and pure as a glittering snow-flake, and its lady-love was a simple little darling white strawberry flower.

They lived a life of joy and happiness in the tranquil wood, until one day a butterfly with brown velvet wings came on a visit from the meadows, and talked and bragged a good deal about its long journeys, and what it had seen and learned. It described, amongst other things, a garden, which was situated quite near to the wood and full of gorgeous flowers, one of which was so beautiful that all the flowers of the wood taken together could not compare with it alone.

The butterfly from the meadows returned to its home, but the little white butterfly could not leave off

thinking of the gorgeous flowers of the garden, and felt a great longing to see them.

Next morning it prepared to set out on a journey to the garden, and in spite of the little strawberry flower shedding tears and begging it to stay at home with her, it went.

In the splendid large garden, where many flowers grew and withered, where many butterflies dallied and flitted about, there grew a rose that had had its petals painted by the day-dawn, and was the most beautiful of all the flowers in the garden, though as yet it only coyly blushed and partly hid itself in the lap of the green calyx that nursed it.

The butterflies of the garden fluttered round the rose and shook their left wings, meaning to say: "I love you!" And they were all gorgeously clad—some were dotted with gold, others variegated or striped, and many glittered in all the colours of the rainbow; but the rose closed its chalice to all when they wanted to kiss it, and that astonished the butterflies, for they were wont to sport freely with all other flowers.

Soon the little butterfly from the hill with the birchen wood arrived; it had no adornments, was only clad in snowy white, on which there could not be discovered the slightest spot or stripe. It was the bridegroom of the little strawberry flower come to see the beautiful garden; and when it beheld all the gorgeous flowers and all the gaudy butterflies, it thought of returning home at once, so shy and bashful was it; but at last it summoned up courage,

flew into the garden and alighted on a frond a little distance from the crimson rose, and there it sat gazing at the beautiful belle of the garden.

The sun rose higher and higher, the air became warmer and warmer, and when the sunbeams reached the budding rose, it swelled with joy in the fulness of its grateful heart and gracefully unfurled its lovely leaves, charming all the grand butterflies, while the bashful little stranger from the wood, dazzled by its beauty, kept at a distance.

The heart of the snowy butterfly beat so violently that it almost burst its bosom, as the little wooer flitted forward in a flutter to the blushing rose, and whispered, "How beautiful you are! I wish I had such a bride!"

But the rose looked disdainfully at the daring intruder, and said: "Impertinent one! How darest thou come here in such simple clothing? Thou hadst done far better to have remained in the wood, and chattered thy compliments to the flowers of the coarse heather."

The gaudy butterflies gathered round the simple little butterfly and jeered rudely at its plain white attire; and sorrowful in mind it flew away to its home in the woods, sighing, "Why did I fly to the garden? I was so happy before, when I lived in the quiet wood with my innocent bride; but now I still long for the crimson rose, though I am sure it is not as good as it is beautiful."

When the butterfly of the wood had returned home to its white strawberry flower, it found no longer any

delight in its innocent and loving talk as before; all its own thoughts flew back to the garden and the crimson rose.

The sun rose to his noontide glory, and shone lovingly on the flowers in the garden. All the butterflies hovered about, but one even above all the others; the new arrival threw into the shade all the rest, for it was so grand and wondrously beautiful, its wings shone with golden gems, and its eyes sparkled as though they were two fiery carbuncles.

When the gilded butterfly flew past the flowers in the garden, all threw wistful, tender glances at it, for it was far more beautiful than any other—the most perfect they had ever seen; but it flew haughtily past them, straight on to the crimson blushing rose, who was looking for it, smiling a welcome with its swelling coral lips.

Entranced by the sparkling eyes and dazzling raiment before it, the rose quite forgot to vest itself with the armour of innocence, and in an unguarded moment the golden butterfly flew straight to the open embrace of the rose, and sucked the honey from her lips.

A consuming fire coursed through the fibres of the rose, and it withered leaf by leaf; and not till the last leaf was blasted did the golden butterfly soar away; but lo! it was no longer gorgeous and bright, but black as night.

Trembling with fear, all the other flowers closed their petals, and when they looked up again, the black butterfly had happily disappeared; but the

rose that had had its colour painted by the day-dawn was withered almost before it had enjoyed the morning of life, and its leaves were scattered by the sighing wind.

The little white butterfly flew once again from the wood to the garden, when the sun was lowering in the west—irresistibly drawn there by a yearning once more to see the beautiful rose; but it looked in vain, and its heart beat anxiously. It would so have loved to have asked of the other flowers about the rose, but it dared not, for they looked so proud in their gaudy raiments; then its eyes lit upon a common flower of the forest—a chatterbox that grew amongst the weeds on the side of a flower bed —it flew thither and asked, "What has become of the crimson rose?" "Oh, it is a long and very sad story to tell," answered the funny little flower, and commenced to chatter about a lot of things, for chatterboxes are always jabbering. Amongst other things it knew to tell of, was that the ancestors of the rose had been common briars, but through an expert and clever gardener had become ennobled.

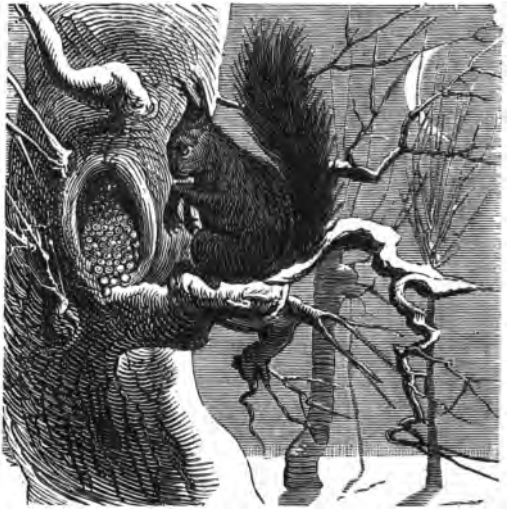
"What has become of the crimson rose?" anxiously inquired the butterfly from the wood, for it had not listened to one word of the gossip.

"Look around you, dreamer!" cried the chatterbox, and grew deep-yellow with rage when it found that the butterfly had paid no attention to its chattering. "These withered leaves that you see scattered about by the sportive wind—of all these the conceited crimson rose was once made up; but so it

always fares with your fancy flowers brought up by art."

The butterfly from the wood could not answer a word, but picked up one of the withered leaves and flew with it home to the wood as fast as its wings could bear it; and when it came home it sank to the feet of the white strawberry flower dying, for its heart was broken.

The night dew fell, and a sympathizing tear glistened in the chalice of the white strawberry flower when it grieved: "Oh, why did my chosen bridegroom not listen to the warning whispers of the birches: simple child of nature, beware of the temptations of the world of fashion and display."



The Squirrel.

He lived inside the trunk of an old gnarled oak tree. The entrance was very small, but when you got well in you might have seen a great big room, several feet deep, for the trunk was hollow from where the first branches stretched out their arms, right down to the roots. It was a splendid store-room for nuts and acorns, but it was greatly wanted, for the squirrel who lived there had got in his head that the more he could gather the more happiness he would enjoy when he grew old.

All round the oak was a thick hazel-wood, where

grew the finest nuts, so that there was every reason to think that the squirrel had excellent prospects of making his way in the world and living comfortably. But the squirrel himself did not think so, and it really cut him to the heart when sometimes he saw another squirrel coming to the hazel-wood to gather bunches of nuts there. Then he set to work to scare away the intruder, for he was determined to possess the nuts all to himself.

From the moment that the squirrel had left his parents, who lived on the other side of the wood, he had begun collecting stores of his own. Everything that he thought of any value whatever, he picked up and hid in the trunk of the old oak tree.

"You are preparing for housekeeping, I perceive," chirped a little robin, who was sitting on a small twig of the tree, cocking his head on one side, and contemplating the ceaseless work of the squirrel.

"Oh, dear me, no; it won't be sufficient even for myself," sighed the impudent little hypocrite of a squirrel. "Really, I haven't been able to gather enough to suffice for one single day."

"Oh, come now, you have got heaps down in the hollow," said the little robin, winking his eye knowingly.

"'Tis not true!" remonstrated the squirrel, in a passion. "I possess nothing. And if you spread any such rumour about me, I'll just bite your head off, when I get hold of you."

"Don't flurry yourself, neighbour. I merely

thought you worked so hard with the intention of soon having your wedding day."

"A poor thing like me can't afford to marry."

"Oh, my dear friend, if you get a good wife she will relieve you of half the burden of life, and make everything happy around you. I know a little lady-squirrel, pretty and domesticated, and if you like, I'll fly away and pop the question for you."

"Are you mad?" cried the squirrel, and looked aghast. "A wife! and my snuggery all crowded with hungry youngsters. That would, indeed, be the greatest misfortune that could befall me."

"Don't say that, for what is life without love," twittered the little robin, and gave a trill of pure delight at the mere thought of his mate, whom he soon hoped to meet. But at this moment the squirrel ran away, to continue his restless labour of adding to his stores.

The season arrived when the nuts and acorns were ripe. The squirrel gathered from early dawn till late at night, as long as he was able to see the nuts. He grudged himself a minute's rest, and all the day kept on running with whole clusters of nuts, and dropping them down into his big store-room in the oak. Often he would not eat anything from morning till evening, and when night came, and he was sitting on his heaped-up treasure of nuts, he even grudged himself a good meal, and would instead go out to pick up some seeds, and any other eatables he could find in the dark. When he returned to

his nest, faint and exhausted from fasting and work, he still felt a certain satisfaction in seeing that he had gathered such a heap of nuts, that it would take weeks, perhaps months, to be able to count them.

"I can't feel quite happy, though, before I have got my stores quite full," he thought; and gloating over his wealth, he fell asleep. However, he could never enjoy a perfect sleep, for at least every quarter of an hour he would wake to see that no one came to take anything from the hoarded treasure.

Late in the autumn there came one day to the oak an old squirrel, who had had the misfortune of being bitten by a dog, so that it now was unable to jump about amongst the trees and find food for itself. And so he had to become a beggar, and wander about in the woods, asking other squirrels to give him something to live upon during the winter that soon would set in. Every one gave the poor cripple something—those who had least perhaps gave the most; but when the beggar came to this squirrel, who had his whole store-room so full of the finest nuts, the stingy fellow snapped at him in a rage, and said: "I have worked like a slave for what little I have, and it won't be enough for me, let alone anybody else, and I can't afford to throw anything away to beggars and tramps such as you."

The poor cripple was not even able to get a hearing from the rich squirrel, who quite drew a breath of relief when the poor beggar had limped off.

The frost came, and still more intent became the squirrel on his work of gathering in. There was now only just enough room left for the owner to creep in. But even *that* he wanted to fill up, and so off he went again, hieing along from branch to branch, away and then home, away again and home again; and one evening, just as the snow was coming on, the store-room was at last quite filled to the very entrance. Yes, so crammed full, that the squirrel himself was compelled to remain outside.

Now the moment had arrived when the wealthy squirrel had expected to feel quite happy. He tried also to persuade himself that he really was happy, but somehow he did not quite succeed. Certainly, he felt quite cosy and content at thought of the thousands upon thousands of nuts he had hoarded in the hollow trunk; but for all that, he trembled and shivered, for the evening grew cold. During the night he felt quite stiff in his limbs from the frost, and he would like to have crept into the hollow of the oak tree; but to get room he would have been compelled to throw out a great number of nuts, and that he grudged.

"Hu! hu! hu! where's the wife that would help me now?" the squirrel thought, shivering, for he felt he was ill and needed assistance.

But not a living creature was to be seen, for he had driven everybody away long ago with his greediness.

And the cold increased, and the squirrel became more and more stiff in his limbs, till at last, when he thought he would sacrifice a portion of his treasures

to gain entrance to his nest, he was too weak to pull out the nuts, and when the early dawn was grey he was dead, and sat erect in death, with his eyes wide open, for he had not even a friend to close them.

The next day the little robin flew to the distant poor relations of the rich squirrel, and told them what had happened, and they all hastened immediately to the old oak tree and had a jolly time of it, dividing the treasure.

Who pitied the poor rich dead miser? I fear not one of them.

You must not do that!

NEVER in all your days did you see a finer poultry shed than the one of which I am about to tell you. It was large enough for twenty hens, and yet there was ample room besides for the cock and all the chickens.

The line of ancestors of one of the hens even went back so far as to hail from Cochin China, and she was nicknamed by all the others "her ladyship;" and none could trip along the yard with such elegance, and none could vie with her in the art

of standing on one leg, cocking her head on one side, and winking with one eye. But she was most celebrated for her great wisdom in the very important knowledge of what was allowed, and what was not allowed, in fine poultry society.

This hen had become quite an oracle on questions of etiquette and manners, and indeed it was very seldom that any of the others ventured to ask her opinion, for she generally only tossed up her head, as much as to say that she considered it quite incompatible with her dignity to communicate her wisdom to common low-bred hens, who were blessed neither with pedigree nor superior minds.

One day my lady disappeared from the roost, and the other hens were wondering a great deal where she might have gone to, but the cock only chuckled, "I know, I know," and looked mightily mysterious. But one fine day, soon after, there was a tremendous hubbub among the tribe of hens, for my lady had returned, and brought with her three piping chickens of her own. Proud and disdainful she tripped towards the other hens, who all stood aghast, with their beaks wide open, staring at the new-comers.

"I suppose these are real Chinese," cackled one hen.

"Oh dear no; then they would have their eyes askew, but that they haven't."

"Only three paltry young ones! I bring nine at a time, I does," said a big fat hen from the country.

"Oh dear me!" ejaculated her ladyship, having

listened to the last remark, "mothers of a superior class never have many little ones."

"But only fancy what a genteel bringing up they are sure to get," all the hens cackled in chorus; and they were all agreed, that if they never before had had any paragons of chickens in the poultry yard, now was the time that such would be found there.

"Cheep, cheep, cheep!" chirruped the small bastard Chinese, and ran after their ma, who picked and pecked about for them; but as they grew bigger they had to peck for themselves. Besides, my lady became so occupied with their education, that she found no time to think of getting them anything for their little crops. From early dawn till roosting-time my lady's beak was busy with, "You must not do that! That is not allowed in fine society, my little ones; remember, 'tis not the fashion."

"Kaw, kaw, kaw, kaw, here are plenty of worms!" cackled the other hens, on the top of a dust-heap, and immediately the little chickens wanted to hasten there, but her ladyship cried out:

"Dear me, it won't do for you, my chickens, to go and scramble there; you would dirty your fine white feathers. You mustn't do that!"

"Cheep, cheep, cheep, we are so hungry!" chirruped the little ones.

"Even that is better than to condescend to anything that isn't quite genteel," said my lady.

One day all the other, now big, chickens, were practising flying up and perching on the roof of

the cow-shed. After many repeated failures they all succeeded at last in accomplishing this difficult task.

"Cheep, cheep, cheep! We must learn that as well," cackled the three aristocratic chickens, and flapped their wings, but her ladyship became quite angry, and said, "It won't do for fine, well-bred young chickens to join in such carryings-on. You mustn't do that! If one is to be regarded as respectable in this world, one must preserve a demeanour prim and genteel."

The little lady chickens tripped demurely and elegantly by the side of their mamma, and never went anywhere by themselves to play, for that wouldn't have been thought respectable: but all three became dreadfully lean, and were never seen in high feather; they would so have liked to accompany the other hens under the floor of the cow-shed, for there was plenty of food to be got there, but, dear me, that would never have done for stylish young chickens!

One morning only two of the elegant chickens awoke—the third had died from starvation. My lady was deeply touched by the occurrence, "but," she said, "better that this should happen than that the departed dear one should so far have forgotten her good manners as to descend to the floor of the cow-shed. Where she now lies, she has at least not a stain upon her white feathers."

Her ladyship winked with one eye, cocked her head on one side, and gave a cackle, which meant

that if *she* was content with what had happened, everything was all right.

The same day, towards evening, all the hens were pecking on some fallow-land, behind the barn. Her ladyship was also there with their little ladyships, but kept at a respectable distance from the common breed. All of a sudden there was a fearful ado, for a fox had come sneaking into the fields. Every one that could fly hastened to reach the safety which the roof of the barn afforded, but her ladyship and her daughters knew such a thing was not to be thought of, so the fox got them all, and carried off her ladyship in his jaws, while he hied away to the wood; and when the cock, perched on the roof of the barn, beheld how the fox ran away with the hen, he crowed, "Her ladyship is having a ride in a very striking conveyance, and what a fine bustling style she has gone off in, to be sure!"

At Church.

FAR over the land echoed the chimes of the church-bells.

> "Listen, listen to our chime!
> Come and praise the Lord!
> Haste with pure hearts, and hither bring
> Glad thanksgivings to your King!"

sang the church-bells, and the people were pouring in great numbers into the little white church, which pointed its spire high up in the air, as if to say, "It is I who show the way to heaven!"

Foremost amongst the church-goers came the squire and his little daughter. Wherever they came, people bowed and fell back a little to let them pass, and many said aloud, "What a pretty little lady she is, and how stylish!"

Mary—that was the name of the little girl—knew full well that they spoke the truth, for her hat was brand new, with artificial flowers and a feather waving in the wind. Led by her father's hand, Mary entered the church, and took her seat in the principal pew, near to the vestry.

But last of all, amongst those whom the church-bells had called together, came a poor little ragged girl, known in the country around by the name of "beggar Ingrid," for she would sometimes hold out her hand to solicit alms, when her mother was too ill to work for the support of both of them. Ingrid placed herself by the church-door to be the last one to enter, but her eyes lit upon the gaudily-decked pulpit, with its gold-embroidered red velvet cushion, and she looked at the bright resplendent chandelier that hung from the ceiling, and hesitated to go inside the church. Then her eyes wandered from one to another of the congregation; they all wore their best Sunday clothes, and when Ingrid looked at her own ragged gown, and down at her bare feet, she became afraid. She fancied that every one in the church turned round and looked at her, and then she ran away as far as the wall of the churchyard, where she seated herself on a tombstone under a large lime tree.

The organ poured out its strains to the church, and the congregation joined in a hymn of praise.

"Now you must follow the words in your hymn-book," said the squire to his daughter, and Mary opened her little hymn-book, that had velvet covers and a silver cross for ornament, but while singing, somehow she thought of the flowers in her new hat, and the thoughts led her astray, so that she could not find the verses they were singing. When the sermon began and Mary ought to have listened, she thought instead of how the people outside the church had said, "What a pretty little lady she is, and how stylish!" It tingled in her ears, and she thought it much prettier than the clergyman's sermon. And she stole a glance around to see if everybody in the church was not staring at her feather, and the red roses, which were dangling amongst some green leaves on one side of her hat. And whilst sitting thus, she fancied that the roses began to grow, and push high in the air, that the stalks grew taller and taller, till the flowers at last had reached the arch of the roof and wound themselves around a large iron hook, and pulled the hat up after them. Mary became so frightened that she put both her hands to her head—she felt the hat was still there, and that the roses had not changed their place. It was only imagination, but Mary had been so alarmed that she thought she could hear her heart beat, "tic, tac," just ever so like the big clock at home in the hall.

"Beggar Ingrid" was all this time seated on the

tombstone in the churchyard. She was thinking how she had come to church on purpose to pray for her mother, who was lying ill and without assistance, in a lonely hut, far up in the forest.

"I wish I dared to enter the church!" Ingrid sighed, but she ventured not. "I will pray for mother, though, out here," she said to herself, and folded her little hands in prayer.

The green dome of the linden rose higher into the air, and extended far and wide. All the trees around changed into richly-carved pillars entwined with garlands, and they carried an arch aloft, glimmering with beautiful colours. Between the pillars floated little clouds, out of which peeped forth small angelic heads, with white pinions behind, and they nodded to Ingrid. Glorious music filled the air, and the little angels in the clouds joined in the hymn. It was a sight of dazzling splendour, of which no words can convey an idea—as if Heaven itself had withdrawn its veil to allow the little praying beggar-child to behold its glory. And a soft voice reached her from the effulgent distance, saying: "For the meek and lowly I raise a church wherever they kneel and fold their hands in prayer."

Barge No. 3.

SIDE by side the tug-boat and the barge No. 3 were jogging along, the latter deeply laden with quarry stones and gravel. Ugly and awkward looked the barge, with its broad sides bearing evident marks of having been roughly handled; but the smart little steamer was spruce and newly painted dark green, with a yellow stripe all round, and had its name, *Ready*, painted in bold white letters on each side of its prow.

"Pfoh, pfoh," puffed *Ready* in the heat of a summer day, and felt itself perspiring with steam from the exertion of the pull, but it was compelled to fire away and keep up the steam, for No. 3 was

dragging and heavy to jog along with, and the wind was against them.

"It is a sad plight to be linked together with a big, bulky barge, when one wants to steam onward in life!" *Ready* gave so deep a sigh that it re-echoed in the very boiler. "If, at least, you were a barge of the usual lot, like No. 1 and No. 2, one might put up with you. They are built at the proper wharf for barges and lighters, but you are the most awkward barge I ever met with, and so ugly that I really feel ashamed to travel by your side. I have a good mind to give you such a kick as would send you to the bottom, and so rid myself of you, and be no more vexed by such a thing as you."

The little steamer had now finished scolding the big barge, and was holding its breath in suspense so that No. 3 might defend itself; but nothing was heard beyond the monotonous splash of the waves against the prow.

"It is not only that you are so heavy, but you are also dull, and deaf, and dumb as a sea monster," *Ready* resumed by way of provocation.

"Well, you are right, youngster," the barge at last commenced. "Voyaging so far together we ought to while the time away somehow. Do you like stories of adventures?"

"Certainly I do. But what can you have to tell about?"

"My own adventures."

"Well, but don't let them drag—go ahead!"

"Listen! At a wharf, far up in the north, I rested on my bed of sleepers. Many a wind has blown since that day. I felt an unspeakable desire to leave the bed on shore and fly to the embrace of the billows that were stretching out before me. At last the longed-for day came. A great throng of people had gathered on each side of me to witness my being launched into the sea. Those that were on my deck were all in holiday attire, and glasses were ready in which to drink to my success. I shall never forget the moment when for the first time I felt the sensation of motion within me. It thrilled me with a feeling of exquisite joy. Every fibre in my wood was alive, and I felt myself borne on white wings far away into the great space before me. At the moment when my prow dipped into the surging water a man ran up aft, and through the speaking trumpet, proclaimed in a loud voice, 'This brig is called *The Eagle of the Seas!*' As if by some magic word of command instantaneously hundreds of flags and streamers were hoisted on and around me, and there I lay cradled on the mighty deep, mirroring myself in the calm waters of the bay—a thing of beauty and grace.

"Now my days of glory began. I had a golden eagle affixed to my prow, and I felt as if the yearning of my whole being was centred and expressed in that proud bird with its expanded wings, ever eager to fly out in the wide world. My masts pointed to the sky, and the snowy sails hung in graceful furls from my extended arms. I was

soon laden, and at last one fine day the jolly tars weighed the anchor, and I danced away over the Baltic waves.

"For the first time I beheld the unfathomable space before me ; I learned to love its wondrous and ever-changing beauty. I became enraptured when I beheld the first speck of dawn dart forth as an arrow of fire, and ignite the cold grey billows with the fire of the eastern sun, till all the ocean was one expanse of glittering waves. With what a charm did the mantling sunset reflect itself on the grey-tinted main, as if it were a mirror of steel. And when the stars appeared—spangled on the veil of night—I floated listlessly on the water in a dream of bliss. When the sea was calm, I beheld with joy my own beauty traced in the sighing waves that wooed my sides; but when the foam of angry billows roared around me, and swept in vain over my deck, I exulted in my strength of limb. On many a voyage have I felt the radiant sunbeams pierce my deck as if they were darted assegais: most so when I passed the equator. I came to distant climes where groups of palm-trees towered along the shores, and raised their leafy domes against the azure sky. Black slaves dragged heavy sugar-chests down to the harbour, and when I sailed homewards with the precious cargoes, many a night when all was still around me did I listen to the tales the sugar-chests were telling each other about the vast fields where the sugar-cane grew thick as bulrushes on the water's edge, and where the negroes writhed

under the lashes of the planter's whip. Sometimes I thought I heard the plaintive songs of the wretched slaves when in the evening, after a day of toil, they wended their way homeward from the fields; and sometimes I heard sobs and piteous moaning, as if husbands and wives were being parted, or children torn from their parents to be sold to the highest bidder of the slave auction-mart. And all that I saw and heard I treasured in my memory.

"There were other voyages, when I came to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, where the savages, at the sight of me, rushed down to the shore and shot impoisoned arrows from their bows at the sailors. I visited the gorgeous East Indies, and all the things that I brought home from that wondrous land—the early home of all weird stories in the world—had strange and grotesque tales to relate. I listened to the legends of the temples—thousands of years old—where the heathen images are made of pure gold and decked with priceless glistening gems; where the bajaderes, or dancing girls, vie in graceful motion with the soft and ethereal clouds themselves; where the wheels of the mighty Juggernaut's car crush to death the wild fanatics that pave its wave; where the disconsolate widow allows herself to be burned alive on the funeral pile of her dead husband; where the holy Ganges pours forth its broad waters to the sea, and on the surface of which great feasts are held; where thousands of boats move with coloured lanterns, and the Hindoos, during jubilant strains

throw themselves into the holy river, there to seek the eternal happiness promised by their creed.

"Rich in remembrances and strangely chequered, was the life of my early days. Sometimes I sailed with the genial winds of passage, and at other times I battled with the icebergs of the arctic seas. Many a leak I got in these hard strifes, but I had a heart of oak and forest limbs, and rode the sea as long as any one has done. Certainly, long voyages became less frequent, and I had to content myself with carrying coals, that gave me a swarthy complexion, but I was still the proud *Eagle of the Seas* unfurling my wings as I soared over the boundless main. But at last came the day of adversity. A raging, clamorous storm threw me against the coast, and the sharp-edged teeth of the rocks cut deep into my frame. My masts fell beneath the axes of the sailors, and there I was thrown helplessly amongst the furious breakers, and could do nothing to escape their fell embrace. When the sea, regretting its fury, became gentle again, I was rescued and tugged into harbour—but they said my limbs were out of joint, and my wings were gone, so that I could never more sail the sea, and I was sold as a wreck.

"Everything I had been so proud of was taken from me, and the golden eagle that adorned my prow was nailed to a lighter-shed at the wharf where I had my worst damage repaired, to enable me again to enter upon active service, though it was but as a barge. Even my very name was taken

from me. I was henceforth called No. 3, and must now jog along with you and listen to your complaints that I am even worse company than one of the regular barges."

Here the barge ended its story, and neither said a word during the remainder of the voyage. No. 3 mused upon olden times, and *Ready* thought a great deal, but kept his reflections to himself. But from this time forth *Ready* never complained again of having to associate with No. 3. On the contrary, it thought No. 3 was the very best companion it could have, and willingly did it pull it along, however it dragged, only to have the delight of hearing more stories from the distant climes the *Eagle of the Seas* had visited. No. 3 seemed no longer ugly and awkward, for now *Ready* had learned to discern the noble lineaments, though they were broken and shattered, and one day it could no longer keep back its feelings, but said, "I hope, noble veteran, that you will forgive me for despising you once! I judged like the giddy world, which does not understand that under a shabby appearance often dwells a treasure of memories like yours."

Such is War.

AULT into the car, Swen; awake, the horses are impatient and eager to fly away!"

It was Jack o' Dreams who had come on a visit; he had a coachman's hat, with a silver band, on his head, and a whip in his hand.

"Off we go at a gallop!" he cried out, and Swen didn't tarry, but was ready in a moment to accompany him.

When Swen came out on the doorsteps, he stopped and clasped his hands with delight.

"There is my car," said Jack o' Dreams, and pointed to a small conveyance that seemed to float in the air.

"I never saw anything more beautiful!" cried Swen, admiringly; and he was right, for the sparks from the horses' shoes flashed like dazzling fireworks, and the naves of the wheels glistened like dewdrops. The car was carved of a large scarlet-coloured shell,

and the tires of the wheels were made of purest gold. But the whole carriage was no bigger than one that might have been placed on a tea-tray.

"You see that my rocking-horses are quite ready," said Jack o' Dreams, and cracked his whip, so that the steeds reared, and snorted fire out of their nostrils.

"Your carriage is too little for me," sighed Swen; but then Jack o' Dreams touched him with his whip, and when Swen looked at himself in one of the golden rails of the carriage he saw, as in a looking-glass, that he was quite as dwarfish as the coachman, and he began to laugh at himself, for really he looked so funny!

"Now get up into the carriage, and off we go!" Jack o' Dreams called out, and the next moment they drove off through space at such a speed that the air whistled around them, as it does when the storm goes out for a ride.

"Don't drive quite so fast!" Swen entreated.

Jack o' Dreams pulled in the reins a little, and slackened speed so far that the sound was now like that of the music of an æolian harp, as the air played among the flapping harness.

"Where are we going?" Swen asked.

"Where you always have wished to go to," Jack o' Dreams answered; "but if we are to arrive in time I must put my rocking-horses into a gallop."

"Drive on!" Swen called out, and off they flew again at such a speed that Swen was compelled to hold his hair with his hands, so that it might not fly off too.

At last Jack o' Dreams pulled in the horses, and called out, "Look around you!"

The carriage had stopped on a high hill, from which there was a fine view. Swen beheld a town with white houses and high towering church spires. The largest house had gilded tiles, which glittered beneath the beams of the rising sun.

"That is the king's palace," said Jack o' Dreams; "on yonder plain all his soldiers are encamped."

Swen looked towards the camp, and saw the soldiers marching forth many columns deep. Trumpets sounded and drums were beating.

"Hey for a gallop! Look where the cavalry dashes along with drawn sabres flashing in the sunlight."

"Oh, I wish I was amongst them!" Swen called out, after having been for a moment struck dumb and overwhelmed with admiration.

"That is just where I am going to take you!" said Jack o' Dreams, and unharnessed the horses, after which he produced from the coach-box a pair of saddles with splendid trappings. "I take *Folly* and you take *Jolly*," he added; and before you could have said, "Well, I never!" both horses were ready caparisoned with pearl-embroidered trappings and coloured silken bridles.

"Do as I do!" Jack o' Dreams said, and vaulted into his saddle. Swen obeyed, and the next moment they flew along down to the encampment. Now the city gates opened, and a cavalcade of splendid horsemen emerged from it. Foremost rode a man

clad in bright clothing, and with feathers waving in his hat. His breast was covered with glittering stars, and when he dashed along the plain it was like a dazzling sunbeam shooting forth.

"Those are the king and his retainers," said Jack o' Dreams by way of enlightening Swen, and made him understand by signs that they were both to follow in the king's retinue. When the cavalcade after a while had reached the camp, and as they were passing the columns, deafening cheers arose along the lines, and the king addressed his soldiers.

"The hour of glory has come! Soldiers were born to fight, and to day you must vindicate with your swords the grand idea for which all great kings have ever waged warfare. Might is right. My neighbour, the silver prince, cannot oppose me, so I am bent upon annexing his possessions to my realm."

The king's oration was responded to with incessant cheers of exultation, and the soldiers brandished their swords to show their eagerness for battle.

"Forward!" the king himself commanded, and the whole army pressed onward. Everybody was delighted, but none more so than Swen, for to mingle in a battle was to him happiness itself.

Jack o' Dreams brought him to the king and said, "Dread lord: I have the honour of presenting to you a brave warrior."

"He is welcome," the king said, and turning to Swen he asked, "Are you as brave as you look?"

"That you may depend upon," Swen answered; "and I will show it if you make me a general."

"Stop a bit, 'they that run fast stumble;' but since you are so high mettled I will make you a corporal."

Swen thought it was rather too subordinate a part, but as this was the only condition on which he could accompany the army, he accepted the offer. There was nothing for him but to dismount from his horse and fall into line with the common soldiers, and march with them.

"Now you must look out for yourself," said Jack o' Dreams, and he took *Jolly* by the bridle, nodded to Swen, and darted off in a gust of wind.

When the sunbeams at noon made Swen feel broiling hot, he became tired and wanted to sit down to rest himself.

"Are you mad, man?" cried the lieutenant, and gave him a blow on the back with the flat of his sword. "If you don't follow us now, you will get a bullet through your brains."

Swen nearly began to cry, but as he felt ashamed to do so, he forced his tears back again. He continued to march on, but at every step he took he felt as if he trod upon thorns. At last the word of command was given to halt, and the whole army drew up. But it was not to rest, for the enemy was within reach, and the drums were beating for the assault. Now Swen quite forgot that he was fatigued, and with levelled bayonet he charged with the others the dense columns of the enemy. Only the king and his staff stopped at a respectful distance, where no firing could reach them.

A tremendous din shook the air. It was the cannon that had opened fire upon the foe, and Swen saw how the balls tracked their way with blood everywhere. At this sight a cold shiver ran through him; but he soon beheld nothing more, for the smoke of the battle became thick as a fog. He pressed ever forward, till at last he encountered the enemy face to face. The bayonets crossed each other, and the butt ends of the muskets fell like clubs. The shriek of anguish from the wounded was heart-rending to hear. Swen felt suddenly a smarting cut in his breast, and a hoarse voice bawled out:

"One who plays at this game must take what comes."

All grew black before Swen's eyes and he sank down on the ground.

"Only let me get away from here!" he prayed in anguish.

"No, now you must die," continued the hoarse voice. "Such is war. Only he who does not meddle with it goes free."

Swen saw a grinning face and a sword descending like lightning. The blood ran cold in his veins, and he wanted to cry out, but his voice forsook him. The blade whizzed over his head, and at the same moment Swen felt as if he were borne aloft, and when he looked up he found himself seated on *Folly's* back, and Jack o' Dreams riding on *Jolly* by his side.

"Do you still wish to be a general?" Jack o' Dreams asked him, smiling.

"No, no!" Swen answered.

"And your toy-soldiers?"

"I discharge them."

"But your own fine helmet, your gun, and your sword?"

"I will carry them all up to mamma's lumber room."

"And if she asks you why you do this?"

"Then I shall tell her of the awful things I saw in the battlefield last night, and tell her that 'Such is war.'"

Papa's Globe.

THE children's toys were not usually allowed to be seen in papa's study. A few weeks after Chirstmas it happened, however, that all the Christmas presents that by this time had been broken were stowed away on the top of papa's bookcase, there to await their turn to be mended. A small carriage, with a boy without a hat, and a girl with only one arm, were put amongst the other toys. The boy was called Axel and the girl Anna—names which the children themselves had given them on Christmas-eve, when they arrived. Axel looked quite dignified where he sat, though he was bare-headed, and Anna was as pleasant and smiling as

when she was in enjoyment of both her arms. There are very few who can bear up against misfortune as well as she did.

But the two little dolls thought it very tiresome to keep sitting for so long, all day and all night through, in the carriage, without being taken notice of by any one. It was too lonesome by far for these two, who during Christmas time had been constantly on the hop, and had been continually patted and kissed, and driven about in grand processions.

The silence of the study was really unbearable, accustomed as they were to roars of laughter from the merry children. One evening when papa had put out the lamp, and retired to his bed-room, little Anna broke the silence, and said to her gallant companion: "I can bear it no longer; I must jump out of the carriage, even if I break my other arm."

"There is no occasion for doing that; I will alight first, and receive you in my arms," Axel answered.

They both jumped out on the top of the book-case, and just at this moment the moon peeped into the room, and lit it up almost as bright as daylight.

"I don't know anything more tiresome than to sit still in the same carriage for a fortnight, and not move along one bit," said Anna, and took a hop and a step for very joy of feeling at ease.

"Yes, you are quite right. One feels such a desire to be on the move that one could almost set out for a run to the end of the world."

"The very words I was about to utter! I have

such a longing to get out into the world. If you agree with me we will set out at once. The whole world lies open before us."

Anna pointed to papa's globe, which stood on the top of the bookcase, and which had become wonderfully changed in the moonlight. It was no longer a mapped-out globe on coloured paper, but it had become a world of real nature, filled everywhere with life. The sea roared, green woods appeared, and giant mountains towered in the air. The glaciers of the Alps glistened as if they were of silver, and mighty rivers leapt forth from the hills, and wound their course through the valleys to the sea.

"Oh, how beautiful!" Axel cried out, and clapped his hands with delight. "I should like to look at this quite near."

"That is just what we are about to do," said Anna, and nodded.

"But how are we to do it?"

"I will manage that for you," whispered a voice behind them; and when they looked round they beheld a bright apparition of a beautiful woman, with a pair of party-coloured wings in her hands.

"My name is 'Phantasy,' and whoever I give wings to can fly wherever he likes."

Phantasy fixed the wings to the shoulders of the little people, and after having expressed their thanks to her, they were soon on their way.

Their airy journey crossed vast snowy fields and forests of firs and pines, where the trees carried heavy burthens of new-fallen snow; they soared

over mountains high and valleys deep, and soon reached the boisterous sea.

"This is the North Sea, and now we leave Sweden and Norway behind us," said Axel, who was well up in geography, since he had associated in the children's room with their school-books.

"Oh, look there! What a number of swans there are floating on the water!" suddenly exclaimed Anna.

"Those are not swans, stupid! they are the white cliffs of the coast of England, and now we are sailing over the Atlantic Ocean," Axel replied, by way of enlightening her.

The water roared tremendously, and the two companions lowered themselves on their wings, so that they might see more closely the huge turbulent billows. A strong breeze swept over the sea, and the waves rolled onward, ever tossing their crests aloft, as if in pride and wrath. Large steamers crossed in all directions, and their lighted lanterns glimmered like floating fireflies, and reflected themselves fitfully on the dark waves. Numerous vessels voyaged over the sea, and appeared like gigantic sea-gulls, when the moon lit upon their white swelling sails.

"There sails one with a blue and yellow flag. That is a Swedish vessel, and we might alight on it and rest a while. A Swedish vessel is, as it were, a piece of the country afloat," said Axel; and the next moment they had both descended on one of the yards. At the helm stood the steersman, and on the

forecastle sat a sailor on the look-out. He was reading a letter, and when he had read it he folded it carefully together, and placed it beneath his coarse jersey, close to his honest heart. Perhaps a letter from his sweetheart, or may be one from his old mother, who, in her lonely cottage, is thinking of her son—abroad on the wild ocean, voyaging to distant climes. After a while the sailor commenced singing:

"Oh, the land where my dear one sleeps at home,
Is the fairest land upon all the earth;
Let others 'mong roses and palm trees roam,
Give *me* the snow-clad land of my birth."

"We shall become homesick if we stay here any longer, and we must avoid that, while we are on our travels," said Anna; and so they soared on their wings again.

"Ressle, rassle," sounded from below a tremendous clashing voice, as if of a thousand running railway wheels and engines at work. Axel and Anna saw a great city below. It was New York, the proud capital of the United States. Great squares were hemmed in by large marble palaces, and the streets were thronged by a busy multitude, and looked from afar as if it were a crawling ant's-hill. Long processions passed onward, playing music, and waving the star-spangled banner. Whistling steam-pipes, roaring steam-trumpets, snorting steam-horses, and splashing steam-ferries were heard everywhere. These were all the impressions that Axel and Anna had time to get of the stir of the great

city; for they could not stay, because they were compelled to be at home on the top of the book-case before to-morrow dawned over the northern climes. Here it was broad daylight, because when there is midnight in Sweden the sun has not yet ceased to shine over the land of America.

"Away!" cried Axel, and away they darted on their wings across the prairies, where the wild buffaloes are hunted by the Indians, and the Indians in their turn are hunted by the white men. Impenetrable black forests—with trees a thousand years old—and ranges of stupendous mountains, with gold and silver in their hidden stagnant veins, appeared and disappeared in the grand panorama, and at last they beheld the fertile plains and flowery hills of California, and then they left the new world behind them.

The Pacific Ocean glittered in the light of the setting sun, and spread out its broad majestic surface, a sea of flaming fire. Its splendour was so dazzling that it nearly blinded the beholder.

"I feel quite giddy!" said Axel.

"Shall we alight on one of the islands, and rest for a few minutes?" suggested Anna.

"No, thank you, I don't care to fall in with cannibals, and be broiled for their dinner. Let us rather fly all the faster."

"It must be tea-time," Anna said, as she perceived a nice odour of tea in the air.

"I should think it is. We are in China. Let us call upon 'the brother of the sun, and the cousin

of the moon.' Perhaps he will invite us to a genuine cup of tea, such as they do not export, and we might drink it out of real China cups."

"Tsing, tsang! Great is our Emperor! The mightiest of all Emperors! His mandates are obeyed throughout the world!" Thus sung the Chinese courtiers in chorus; but in reality the Emperor was to be found a genteel prisoner in a tower of Chinese porcelain, and had no more power than any other Chinese doll.

"Well, I suppose we must be contented with just the aroma of the Emperor's tea," Axel said, and politely handed Anna a flower of the tea-plant.

"And now let us depart, for here everybody looks askance at us," Anna added; but her feminine fear was without cause, for the Chinese are a good-humoured race, and if they look askance at other people, it is simply because their eyes happen to have been placed obliquely.

"Prosit," Anna called out, for Axel sneezed from the strong scent of the spices, as they arrived at the East Indies. There stood arrayed long files of elephants with gold-embroidered trappings, and they all raised their trunks into the air and sounded their own trumpets. It was a great festival, and gold and precious gems glistened everywhere. Hundreds of princes with their body-guards arrived, and their weapons glittered with rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The gorgeous temples opened their portals, and the Brahmin priests performed their sacrifices. In the palm groves charming bajaderes

were dancing to the strains of cymbals and flutes, and on the holy river lay cradled a thousand boats with canopies hung with golden fringes, under which great Rajahs reclined, lounging on cushions of embroidered satin. It was the gorgeousness of Eastern dream-life, and yet it was all real!

"It seems to me this is a perfect paradise," said Axel, and Anna was of the same opinion, but the thought of the bookcase at home was the expelling angel that chased them away from paradise.

As they soared on their wings over the Holy Land, the dawn of day spread a purple radiance over Bethlehem, and Axel whispered to Anna—"Here was born the best Friend of little children; He who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!' A roseate glimmer tinged the land, as if the rising sun by that meant to say—'As I break forth and dissolve the shadows of the night, so once in Bethlehem arose that Light of Love to usher in an eternal day of salvation and bliss!'"

"To the north! to the north!" came the warning of the dawn, and their wings carried them so high that they scarcely got a glimpse of the minarets of Constantinople, or of the Gothic spires of the great European cities. As the grey tint of the early morn in the north set in, just in the nick of time, they arrived safely on the top of the bookcase in the study, and when the first light of day shone into the room the two dolls were seated demurely and without wings in their little carriage,

and papa's globe had resumed its wonted appearance, that of a sphere with coloured paper mapped out upon it. That same morning all the toys were taken down from the top of the bookcase by papa himself. Axel got his hat glued on to his head, and Anna got her arm mended, and the best of it all was that they were again brought into the children's room among the merry little ones. If Axel and Anna themselves have not already related to the children their journey round papa's globe, I have now done it for them, and it all comes to the same thing.

The Boulder Stone.

On the edge of a steep mountain lay a block of granite, which resembled a giant's head; it was resting with its narrow part on the rock, and that portion might be called the neck, while the upper part expanded and became round like a head. White moss covered the top as if it were the crispy hair and from amongst it swayed

some ferns instead of feathers. The block had rested on the rock many thousand years, so that it felt tired of remaining much longer watching the trees down in the valley changing their colour according to the seasons.

One day Master Fox passed by, and the boulder stone called out: "I say, Master Reynard, you, who are so cunning, might assist me to get away from here!"

The fox sneaked round the block several times, but at last he shook his head, and said, "There is no help for such a blockhead as you; you will have to bide your time till the crack of doom;" and with that the fox ran away.

One stormy day the north wind came sweeping over the mountain.

"Take me with you!" cried the boulder stone.

"Ay, that I will, we will dance away together!" answered the storm, and clutched hold of the block with all its power, but it did not even shake; only the snow that covered it, thick as a cap, whirled down in clouds, and fell on the trees in the valley.

"There is no helping you; you will have to bide your time till the crack of doom," raged the storm, and rushed further on its mission, shaking the forest trees on its way.

When spring came a herd of cattle was turned out to graze in the woods, and they were wont to pass down the slope on their way to the fresh meadows below.

"Now, there is a chance for me!" thought the boulder stone, and called out to the bull, "I say, you, who are so big and strong might help me to get away from here!"

"If anybody can help you to that, I think it would be myself," the bull answered; "I alone am stronger than twelve men put together, and to be sure I will give you such a shove that you will turn upside down."

The bull placed himself in front, below the block, and put his horns against the granite head. He pushed with all his might, but the massive stone did not move an inch. Then the bull got into a rage, and dashed his horns so hard against the block that they broke close to the head. With bleeding forehead the bull turned away and roared out, "There is no helping you; you will have to bide your time till the crack of doom."

Peter, a shepherd boy who tended the cattle, had seen how the bull rushed against the boulder stone, and as he approached, he said, "I have a good mind to roll down that block; won't it thunder in the mountains, I warrant!"

There was an echo in the stony head at the sound of a human voice, but it thought, "When Master Fox said no, when the north wind stormed in vain, and when the bull, who is stronger than twelve men, could do nothing, what can be expected from a poor stripling?"

Peter sought until he found a couple of strong branches of pinewood that lay scattered about,

and then he placed himself behind the head, on that side which may be termed above the block. There appeared a broad opening between the giant neck and the rock on which it lay. The lad put one end of one of the branches into this opening, and threw his whole weight upon it. When he had continued a little while in this manner, the block felt a slight trembling.

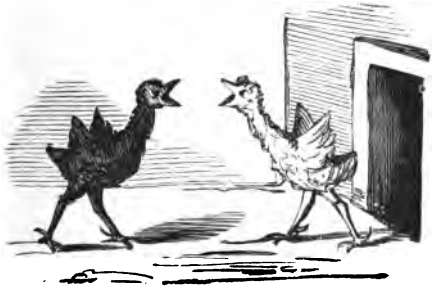
"He moves me! He moves me!" cried the giant head; but the boy heard nothing, for to human beings these granite shapes are dumb.

"One more pull and I succeed!" cried Peter, and inserted the other lever into the opening.

"*His power is of the right sort!*" thought the giant head; but then it grew dizzy, and rolled down the steep rock with a tremendous crash, and at the foot of the mountain it split into pieces, which burrowed deep down into the earth, and there they still are lying, telling their story to all who understand the mute language of nature.

The Two Chickens.

Two little chickens from two little eggs
Came into the world together,
And they frolicked about on their four little legs
Like birds of exactly "one feather."
But they'd more than *one* feather between them, you know;
One had plumage as black as the night,
While the other was dressed from the top to the toe,
In feathers most spotlessly white.
It began in this way—on a sunshiny day,
"I'm the handsomest, none can deny!"
Said the one to the other, "Why no one would say,
"You are half as good-looking as I!"



And so they went on, and they wrangled and raged,
In a fury that grew more and more,
And soon in a frenzy of battle engaged,
They pushed, and they pecked, and they tore.
They stormed, and they struggled, and bit—till the air
Was filled with their feathers and shrieks,
And soon, oh, the pitiful sight that they were,
With the blood trickling all down their beaks!

They rushed round the yard at a terrible rate,
And nearer the cellar they came—
Where the trap-door was open, and lying in wait
Lay the cat, quite enjoying the game.
Nearer, nearer they come! and they tumble and roll
Until, suddenly staggering, one
Disappeared out of sight in that horrible hole,
And a shriek told the deed that was done!

The victor stood still—all his anger was fled,
And his heart beat in piteous woe,
"Oh, brother, dear brother, where are you?" he said—
No answer there came from below!

He bent o'er the edge, by that dark dismal door,
And he cried, and he moaned all in vain,
"Come back, and we never will fight any more!"
'Twas no use—for his brother was slain.

* * * * * *

'Tis a picture for us, who in anger and strife
Strike blows we too late repent sore,
And bitterly then do we mourn a lost life,
As we stand by death's dark dismal door.

The Old Teapot.

"GOOD-BYE, good-bye, dear Miss Sarah!"

"We have had such a delightful evening, and you always give us such an excellent cup of tea!".

So the visiting neighbours were chattering all at once, as they departed, leaving old Miss Sarah seated alone in her glory, in her high-backed chair by the tea-table. The old lady was tired that evening, and the neighbours had excused her bustling about, so she only "sat and curtsied," as she said. When the

din and bustle had subsided, Miss Sarah quietly dropped off into a nap in her chair.

On the centre of the table the teapot was glowing brightly, with the exception of a few dim traces on its side, which were marks from drops that might have been shed in its excess of joy. Round about the teapot five china cups, with their saucy partners danced attendance; they had each a little flaw, and were all a little cracked, but what mattered that? They had also all a little gold emblazoned on them to tell of their ancient pedigree.

"Would you like to hear a little scandal?" said the teapot, having first ascertained that the mistress was sound asleep.

"I should rather think we would! What have we teacups got ears for, if not to listen with?" said one of the cups.

"Oh, don't; we had enough stories before to-day," interposed another one, which was more cracked than the rest, so that it was not quite as fond of full measure as they were.

"Well, I won't force myself upon anybody's hearing," gurgled the teapot, "though in my days I have seen and learned so much that I am well nigh brimful with wisdom."

"Oh yes, tell us; do tell us!" all the other four pairs of cups and saucers cried unanimously, and even the saucer of the dissentient fifth cup chimed in the chorus.

"Well, if you are willing to receive, I am not the one to keep good things back," said the teapot,

mollified. "Prick up your ears now, but don't get excited and chatter in that inconsiderate way of yours, as if to say, 'Well, knock me down!' for if you fall in a flutter on the floor you will all go to pieces, and then there will be an end of you. 'Tis only we teapots that are immortal. I have had holes burned in my side twice in my time, but they were easily mended, and I am as well now as I was thirty years ago! 'yes, better than ever,' says Miss Sarah, who won't praise any tea but what I make for her."

"Order! Let us hear your story!" called out the cups and saucers.

"Well, then, now for the story. I am going to tell you about a young couple that were going to be married."

"Oh, don't; that is too common a theme."

"But this is about a marriage that didn't come off."

"Oh, then, that's something in our style."

"Just look at our old mistress, where she sits nodding in her sleep. Who would ever think she had once been young and pretty?"

"One could scarcely believe it."

"Yet, thirty years ago she was such a pretty hoyden that everybody who saw her took notice of her, and said, 'What a fine girl!' But you see, it is not bestowed upon mankind, as upon us superior teapots, to become more shining and beautiful year by year.

"Oh, I shall never forget when I saw her the first time. I had but recently come from the workshop into the showroom to exhibit myself for sale. Miss

Sarah came there and bought me, for she was already mistress of the house, which she kept for her father, a widower, and he was the master of a forge. I gave quite a tinkle of delight when she lifted up my lid to look into me. My glittering complexion shone brighter than ever with gladness, I was so pleased with her; and that she was also well pleased with me was easily shown by the fact that she at once wrapped me in a newspaper, and carried me home herself. Since that time I have warmed with delight many a time for her sake.

"The day after she brought me home was a Sunday; I was to show for the first time what I was good for, and, dear me, it was to be quite a festive occasion. The master-smith, himself, had asked some friends to accompany him on a trip in a large rowing-boat up the lake, to have a pic-nic on a little island; and they entrusted me with the charge of making tea. It was a glorious day, I can tell you. The calm lake seemed like a big looking-glass, and the sun made us all glad and warm, for it was in the month of July. The boat glided slowly along, and the water glistened so prettily as it dropped from the blades of the very long oars, with which two old women rowed us along. At that time there were no steamboats, but, instead, there existed a rowing-boat guild of old women, decked out in great ugly gipsy bonnets, large blue-and-white-striped homespun aprons and thick mittens, even in the heat of summer. But all this does not belong to the story; I mention it only that the picture may be a little more vivid. What I have to relate

didn't take place till *after* dinner, when the little miss tripped down to the shore to make the tea. John, one of the journeyman smiths, gathered fuel for the fire, and at this our Miss Sarah was so pleased that she nodded and smiled to the handsome fellow till he blushed all over. And when the young couple were on their knees, acting as bellows to the fire, their lips chanced to come so near one another that they met in a kiss. I almost *think* it was the first one, but certain it is that it was the last one, for the master-smith himself came raging like a storm, and nearly frightened the young people into the water; he was terrible to behold.

"'My lass hasn't been forged for such a stray waif as thee,' bellowed the master-smith, and his fist was on the point of acting as a sledge hammer on poor Jchn's back, when in between them stepped young Miss Sarah.

"I don't mind telling you that I thought the master himself lacked both heart and feeling, so, out of sheer spite, I knocked myself down, and emptied all the tea on to the gravel. All enjoyment for the day was put an end to, and I can, with confidence, assert that there was also an end to all enjoyment for the rest of the whole life of poor Miss Sarah, for she loved with her whole soul the poor journeyman, who was now turned away from work by the pitiless master; and she herself has become an old maid, for when her father would not allow her to wed the man of her own choice, nothing could prevail to make her accept anybody else.

"Many a time did she come out to me in the kitchen and read a letter in secret. I understood perfectly well that it was from the man she loved, for she shed many and many a bitter tear. It really cut me to the heart, I assure you, and I verily believe it was out of sympathy with her woes that I had the first hole burnt in my side. I should so have liked to console the poor girl, but in those early days in the lives of Miss Sarah and myself all my feelings warmed in vain for her consolation. She could not, for the very tears that dimmed her eyes, see how I smiled and tried to look pleasant at her.

"When the old master-smith died his daughter was already an old maid, and the orange-blossoms of happiness could never be gathered for her, for John was now married and had a happy young family of three children. Certainly I saw her eyes beam with joy when sometimes she would invite John and his family to her house. But still a veil of melancholy would dim her eyes when she treated the little ones to buns and jam. There was something in her eyes that expressed the thought, 'Why am I not their mother?' And when afterwards she and I were alone, she would weep and sigh piteously.

"Still for me was reserved the happiness of bringing her comfort. As age crept on, she became more disposed to listen to the song of comfort and cheer I used to sing to her as I warmed up at tea-time.

"Oh, what happy days were now in store for me! If I was rather slighted in Miss Sarah's young days,

I was destined, instead, to become the comforter and true friend of her old age. The dreams of my youth had been realized."

"Ah me, how beautiful!" all the cups and saucers called out, and there was quite a clatter on the tea-table that awoke old Miss Sarah, but then all were instantly quiet. She looked round astonished, and said to herself, "I was dreaming of that summer day when John and I were seated in a boat, and our eyes met and spoke of future bliss and happiness—but it was not to be; I suppose God would not have it so!" she sighed.

A tear crept stealthily forth from a corner of her wrinkled eyelid, but at the same moment she glanced at the teapot.

"Perhaps there is a drop left. Ay, so it is! I will put the dear teapot on the hob, and soon it will be warm."

And it did not take many minutes either, before the cup of cheer was ready. Yes, so it is; sorrow and comfort go hand in hand—"and it is a dear delight for the heart to comfort those we love," the dear old teapot was gently singing, when old Miss Sarah again took it in her hands.

The Unknown Paradise.

HAROLD, a little lad, was lolling one day on the beach, gazing at the sea, whose gentle waves rippled to his feet. He had recently read about sunny climes, where the vine hangs in garlands between the trees, where oranges and lemons grow amongst the green foliage, where fragrant blossoms deck the mountains, and where the sky is of an inexpressibly deep blue.

"Oh, I wish I was there!" sighed little Harold, and his heart longed to fly away. He was seated

close to the water, and his eyes looked towards the south. Then all at once he saw a white shape, that soared above the sea. It approached the shore, and Harold beheld at last a large white swan, which floated down through the air to where he sat.

"I can see by your eyes that you are dreaming of the land I come from," said the swan.

"Yes, yes, I long to see that beautiful land in the south!" cried Harold; and he asked the swan to fly away with him, and take him there.

"My road does not lie that way; but now," said the swan, "if you place yourself on my back, I will show you another paradise, of which I have been dreaming, far away from the myrtle groves and palm trees."

"How I should like to see it!"

"Well, then, come with me!"

And Harold at once seated himself on the swan's back, and soon they were both soaring high up in the air.

"Put your arms round my neck, and look carefully around, for now I will fly low, along the earth, that you may see all the beautiful sights as we pass on our way."

And Harold saw vast fields of growing corn undulating in the wind, extending so far that one could not see where they began, or where they ended. Now and then wooded plains intervened, over which white castles lifted their proud turrets, surrounded by grassy lawns and flower-beds. Many church spires pointed to heaven, and handsome

homesteads were scattered everywhere over the land. Soon the view changed, and the swan had to fly higher, on account of the mountains.

Sombre woods of firs and pine trees whispered below them; and down in the dells were little streams of clear blue water, that sometimes expanded into small lakes, round which graceful young birch trees clustered.

"What is that yonder that glimmers from afar, as if it were a vast plain of silver?"

"That is the queen of the lakes!" answered the swan; and when they flew across it, Harold heard the rustling of the waves as they were dancing around the island that lay in the midst of it, like a bathing nymph, clad in the verdure of early spring.

They soared onward over immense forests and fertile plains; and not before they had reached the shore of the lake with the thousand islands did the swan lower his flight to the earth.

"Here we will rest during the night," said the swan; "but why is it that you have tears glistening in your eyes?"

"I shed tears for very joy of the beautiful things I have seen to-day!" said Harold; "I had never even dreamt of anything so glorious."

"To-morrow I will show you still more of my paradise."

And then they fell asleep together on their soft mossy bed; and Harold dreamt during the night that he was in the land of the golden orange groves, but that he, like the swan, longed for the

paradise of birchen-girdled lakes. When at last he awakened the sun had long risen, and their airy voyage commenced anew.

"What a strange place this is we are now passing!" said Harold; and he pointed to the high black hills, separated by the yawning chasms.

"This is the work of human labour. During many centuries striving men have here dug up the very marrow of the earth, have gathered iron ore, and have forged ploughs to till the soil, and swords to defend the country," was the swan's answer.

Now by degrees the mountains on their road became more stupendous, and the forests more impenetrable. Broad rivers rushed forth into the valleys, and foaming cataracts precipitated themselves from rock to rock. A white light glimmered suddenly against the horizon.

"Is it a flock of swans coming there?" Harold asked.

"No, it is the snowy mountain tops."

Harold gazed and gazed around him, and his heart throbbed with increased love for this paradise which he had not known, though so near his home. And he kissed and patted the swan that had brought him to see all this. Time was fleeting rapidly, but Harold thought they had been a long time on their journey, and so he said, "Is not the day waning towards night?"

"Oh! it is night now."

"But the sun shines still?"

"Yes! thus is the summer night of my paradise."

"Now I should like to know the name of the beautiful country you have shown to me?"

"Oh, dear child, it is your own country—your own beloved Sweden. I, like you, was born in this land, and therefore I love its valleys far more than the gorgeous plains of sunny climes. And now when I have given you a view of all that is beautiful in this country *you* must also love it with your whole heart."

"Oh, yes, yes!" little Harold called out, and he would have liked to press the whole country to his throbbing heart. He gathered flowers on the hills and meadows, and kissed them with delight, and tumbled about in merry sport in the gladness of his heart that he had learned to love his own beautiful country.

What will become of Us?

A TALL pine-tree had been cut down in the forest, and dragged away to a back yard, where it now lay chopped into blocks of wood for fuel, piled up on the top of one another. Near the yard, on the other side of the hedge, was a garden with a green lawn, and out amidst the foliage there peeped forth a charming villa, where a family from the neighbouring town were wont, during the summer months, to come to live, and inhale the balmy air and bask in the country sunshine.

During the long, dreary spring the wooden logs had plenty of time to reflect on their future, but the majority of them were agreed that there was not much to reflect upon, for the fate of a log of firewood was once for all decided, and could not be altered.

"We are not good for anything else but to be chopped up into little chips, and consumed in the

large fire-place," one of the blocks of wood said to the others.

"It is, alas! our pre-ordained destiny," sighed another.

"We, the offspring of the forest, cannot attempt anything nobler than to become fire and flames, and to boil the pot," added a third.

But one of the little blocks that was without either flaws or cracks, and which was lying there by itself, so white and pretty, could not agree in its mind that it would not become anything better than charcoal and cinders; and when it heard the disconsolate talking of its comrades, the little white block begged to differ: "Who knows what one is good for!"

But the others considered that it only spoke in pride, and said, "We shall meet again—in the fire-place."

The guests from the town arrived at the villa. A journeyman threw down the pieces of wood from the big pile, he sawed and cut them into little pieces, preparing one log after another for the fire-place.

"Kneech, krasch!" said the logs as they were being chopped into little bits; and when the servant girl carried them into the kitchen, they all whispered to the little white log, "It will be your turn next."

One day the owner came into the back yard, and had his little son with him.

"Now we will knock them with the axe, and hear by the ring whether there is a good piece

of timber among them," said the father, and hammered away on one piece of wood after another.

"No good, no good, only to burn!" all the blocks answered. But soon he came to the little white log, and it had quite another sound.

"Knock on, knock on, fit for anything!" it chimed in the wood.

"There we have one with a good ring in it. Let us take that one," said the father; and he commenced at once chopping large chips from the log, both before and behind, and on both the sides.

"I shall burn as I am, entire, but you will be chopped into contemptible sticks," said a crooked twisted bit of a branch with spite. But though its fibres were terribly cut every time the axe fell, still the little white log thought, "One must be shaped and formed before one can be fit for anything in this world."

And, after every cut from the axe, the form of the log became more spruce and handsome. From a log it was soon formed into the shape of a ship's hull, and carried away to the carpenter's workshop, and with a screw affixed to the carpenter's bench, to suffer more pains in the clutches of various tools.

"She will be a fine clipper," said little Harry, with delight, when after a couple of days he came into the carpenter's shop, and saw how the uncouth log gradually had been transformed into a trim little boat, with smart prow, deck and mast.

"I know now what will become of me," thought

the little boat with feelings of exultation, and was quite impatient to be let loose from the screw of the carpenter's bench, and to be launched out on the limpid waters.

And soon it was completely rigged, the shrouds reaching from the top of the mast down both sides, and out on the bowsprit in perfect fashion.

"There is still something very important wanting, before I can proceed out on the watery main of my own accord," said the boat.

Then the sails were hoisted, white and flapping. "These are my wings," it thought; "but still I want something more."

And then the rudder was affixed, for without that the boat would have been helpless, and not able to steer a right course. "Now I feel myself safe; now I long to leap along the crested billows," said the eager little ship.

And young Harry took her in his arms and carried her to the creek. His father accompanied him, and all, big people and little folks, whom they met on the road turned and went with them to the shore to see the little boat sail across the tiny bay.

Amid exulting shouts and cheers, the little boat was launched. The wind swelled the sails, and, as if it were a swan, it was borne along the waves, now raised aloft on their surging crests, now descending their foaming valleys. The water glittered in the sunlight; the foliage of the green trees mirrored itself in the serene waters on the side of the creek.

from which the gentle wind came, and where the waters were unrippled.

"Such happiness I never dreamt of!" thought the boat, and listened with delight to the praise bestowed upon her by all for being so trim and smart.

"See how she dances on the waves—my pretty yacht!" exulted little Harry.

"A regular clipper!" said the father, and then smiled.

"She seems as if she were almost a living being!" said one of the lookers-on.

And the little skiff almost jumped along the billows for very joy to hear these praises; but suddenly she stopped—thought a moment—turned, and steered towards land.

"Right you are, you little skiff, sweep along the shore again; we have forgotten the most important thing of all," said Harry's father.

And the boat landed again. A tiny piece of blue silk with a yellow cross was hoisted to the mainsail. It was the Swedish flag!

"Now at last you are fully equipped," said the father; and louder and lustier rose the cheering of the onlookers as the tiny schooner sailed afresh across the bay, and the flag waved in the wind.

"The blue flag with golden cross speaks of the blue sky and the golden sun that shed their lustre over the country of my birth!" exulted the little boat, and felt her heart beat with joy that she had believed

in her true calling from the very first, until now at last it had come to pass that she had emerged from her obscure and lonely sphere to become admired and loved, and carry the Swedish flag to honour and glory.

The Shadow.

LITTLE DAVID was very ill in bed. For several days past his mind had been wandering, but now he was a little better, and he was lying quite still, with his eyes closed, smiling in his sleep. His

mother had for a long time watched at his bedside, but now that she thought he was a little better, she had sought an hour's rest herself.

When alone he slowly raised his eyes, and they lit upon the blind, on which was a picture of a wild, foaming stream, gushing forth from amidst rocks. On the banks stood a tree, and below it an old man was sitting, with a long beard, leaning his head on his hands. This picture had always been David's delight when he was well, and he looked at the old man with loving eyes, for his mother had told him it was the old man on the blind who taught her all the pretty tales which she afterwards related to him.

He lay for a while and looked at the blind; then he suddenly fancied that the old man nodded at him. He became frightened, and his heart beat violently. But then again it seemed to him that the old man on the blind began to talk, and his voice sounded so mellow and pleasant that all fear vanished from the lad's heart.

"Still one more story I will tell you," said the old man, and rose from his seat; "it is the story of my own life, and it is my last one upon this earth—if you will consent to do what I ask you."

All was again silent, and David saw how the old man went down to the stream, but as he dipped his foot into the water he became suddenly and wonderfully transformed. His ragged dress was gone, and in its stead he appeared in a garment of glimmering fish scales, with a mantle of sea-

weeds over his shoulders. His brow was circled by a wreath of beautiful water lilies, and he carried in his hand a golden harp with melodious silver strings.

"I am the Spirit of the Lakes and Streams," he said, and touched the strings of the harp so gently that it sounded as when the billows woo and softly kiss the beach. David felt himself exceedingly happy to behold at last the Spirit of the Lakes and Streams, of which he had heard so much, and he listened with suspended breath to the song of the water spirit:

"A thousand years I have waited
By this river side for thee,
For the Lord has promised me pardon
When a child will pray for me."

David's heart trembled with emotion when he listened to the plaintive harmony, and he hearkened again to the words;

"And when first I saw thee before me,
To myself I thought that day,
At last the kind helper has found me
Whose pure heart for me will pray.

Pray for me, child, with hands folded,
And my name breathed soft and low
By thy lips will release me, together
To the heavenly land we shall go."

David breathed a gentle sigh, and after a while his mother came to the bed, where her little lad lay

with folded hands, and his eyes turned towards heaven.

"Are you awake, my child?" the mother softly whispered; but he heard her not, for he had taken wings to carry the liberated Spirit of the Lakes and Streams to the spheres of heavenly music.

The King who could not Sleep.

THE castle of King Garm, surrounded by deep moats filled with water, was situated as if on an island, and was so vast that it seemed like a whole city, where everything glittered in gorgeous hues. The most splendid of everything there, however, was the king's own palace, where the shields of the warriors were hanging on the walls glistening in

the sun. When the moonlight bespangled them, they appeared as a show of a thousand silver lamps.

The court of King Garm was far-famed for its splendour. Great throngs of courtiers appeared there in apparel of golden tissue, and in the halls reclined a thousand long-bearded warriors clad in harness of steel, for Garm was a warlike king, and frequently went abroad to invade and to conquer.

Garm possessed everything that a man could wish of wealth and grandeur. He had absolute command over the lives and possessions of his subjects. Any moment he chose he could give fêtes in his palace, and parks and gardens. He could command the troubadours to sing his praise, and call beauteous dancing-girls to chase away the clouds from his brow. But notwithstanding all this Garm was not happy, because for a long time a great distress had tormented him. You may easily picture to yourselves how dreadful it was, for, poor king, he could not sleep. When night spread her veil of shadow over the castle, and the courtiers fell asleep, and the warriors snored, Garm alone was awake, sighing or raging, because sleep was driven away from his eyes.

One day the king issued an edict that all the leeches in the land, one and all, should try to cure him of this evil, and those who did not succeed should have their right hands cut off. A great many skilled in the art hastened to fly from the country, but a few came of their own accord, and others were brought to the castle by the king's myrmidons.

Several of the doctors made sleeping-draughts for the king, but horrible dreams then tormented the mighty monarch, even worse than when he lay awake. None of the physicians could procure him a calm sleep, so the king's executioner cut all their right hands off. But from that day the king's sufferings became greater than ever, and he writhed in agony on his velvet couch, like a trodden worm. Then Garm, in great despair, issued a new edict, that any one who could procure him calm sleep should be rewarded with half of his kingdom; but to prevent all quack doctors from coming and killing him with their vile physic, it was added, as a precaution, that he who tried to cure the king but did not succeed, the headsman would reward. One evening there came to the palace a young, ragged girl—who was used to tending swine and sheep—and asked to be allowed to speak with the king. "What dost thou want with our great lord?" the courtiers mockingly asked her at the entrance.

"I will save him from his sufferings," the young girl answered.

The courtiers laughed at her at first; but when she still persisted they tried to persuade her to desist, for she was really so beautiful, though she was clad in rags, that they thought it a pity that such a lovely child should so early meet a certain death.

At last, however, they were compelled to bring her before the king, for his strict commands were

that whosoever came to cure him should be admitted. When the poor little shepherdess saw the great and mighty king sitting pale and wan on a crimson chair, she burst out crying.

"Who art thou, and what is thy name?" the king demanded.

"Lilian is my name, and I am only a poor girl, tending swine and sheep at the farthest end of thy kingdom."

"And why dost thou come here?"

"To help thee in thy great distress."

The king dubiously shook his head, and said, "It were better for thee to return immediately to thy home, for here death only awaits thee."

But the child would not leave, but prayed she might be allowed to speak to the king when alone. When the courtiers had left, she went forward to the king and said, "God grant I may not have come too late to save thee, O king!"

"Where is thy remedy?" Garm inquired.

"Follow me, and I will show it to thee," and the girl went to one of the windows of the palace looking out upon the fragrant gardens.

The king rose astonished and followed her. When he came to the window he looked earnestly, almost severely, upon the girl, and repeated his question, "Where is thy remedy?"

"There!" Lilian answered, and pointed to heaven.

The king's brow lowered, and he called out angrily, "Hast thou come here to mock me?"

"Oh no, I have come to teach thee to pray."

When the king heard this answer his passion knew no bounds. He called his guard, and ordered Lilian to be thrown into the prison tower, and a scaffold to be erected in the garden outside his window, for he himself would witness her dying, at sunset the next day.

The night that came was one of the very worst that Garm ever experienced. Not a wink of sleep refreshed his eyes, and he felt as if heavy burthens were pressing upon his breast, when worn out by fatigue he sank down upon his sleepless bed. Horrible phantoms from bygone days passed and repassed incessantly before him, tormenting him with their scourges; and when at last the dawn arrived, the king was so weak from the sufferings of the night that he was unable to get out of bed without assistance, so his courtiers had to carry him to his chair of state.

Before evening came on, the scaffold was ready in the garden, and when Lilian was brought thither the king placed himself by the window. When he saw the little shepherd girl, with a smile upon her face, walk between the grim warriors, all clad in steel, who were drawn up in files on both sides, the king felt a strange sensation in his heart, and he could not look at her, but turned away when she ascended the scaffold. He tried to compel himself to look down into the garden, but he was unable to do so—and sat in breathless suspense to hear the whizzing of the executioner's sword—when suddenly a clear voice struck upon his ear.

King Garm turned round and beheld Lilian kneeling on the scaffold with her eyes turned towards heaven. Around her brow seemed circling a wreath of lilies of dazzling brightness, and Garm could distinctly hear every word she uttered:

"Kind God and Father, teach him to seek Thee with an humble heart, and to pray for forgiveness, so that peace and happiness again may dwell in his heart!" Thus prayed Lilian, but just then the executioner grasped her long and beautiful hair. Then, at last, remorse smote the king's heart, and he rose, greatly agitated, and called out, "Touch her not; loose her, and let her depart in peace!"

When the crowd heard this, all expressed their joy, for no one wished the death of the poor little innocent shepherd girl, though, of course, they had come to see her sacrificed out of obedience to their dread lord.

Before Lilian left the garden she turned round and looked at the king with her large, tearful eyes, and nodded a friendly good-bye to him. But she was soon carried away by the joyous populace.

The next night was still distressful for the king; but yet he got a little refreshing sleep, and in his dreams he saw Lilian standing in the garden looking up at him with her sweet, peaceful eyes. In the morning King Garm asked for Lilian, but the courtiers soon returned and confessed that no one knew where she had gone to.

The king felt really sorry, and commanded that she should be sought for throughout the whole realm

and be brought to the castle. But in vain messengers were despatched to all the furthest limits of the kingdom; they all returned disappointed—no one knew anything about Lilian, the shepherd girl. Time went on, and gradually the king's heart softened. Every sunset, when he was looking out through the windows of his palace, he was reminded of the little shepherd girl, and he almost fancied he saw her floating in the air and pointing to heaven, whispering, "There!" And one evening Garm clasped his hands as he had seen Lilian do in the gardens, and though no words passed his lips, yet an inward prayer heaved his breast. From that moment the king was not the same as he used to be. No more unjust sentences, no more cruel commands were issued by him, and whatever ill he had done he now tried to atone for. All he had injured he asked to forgive him, and showed his repentance by good deeds. Everything he had seized from his subjects he restored; the villages he had burned to the ground he caused to be rebuilded; and to the children whose fathers he had caused to be killed, he himself tried to act as a kind parent. For every one of the good deeds Garm performed, an evil spirit was driven away from his couch, and soon he was able to sleep peacefully as an innocent child. His pale face gave place to one of health and colour, and soon the king was restored to the strength and beauty of manhood. One evening at sunset he stood, as now he was wont, by his open window, with his hands clasped and his lips moving

in prayer. He prayed with great humility and intensity that he might be allowed to see her who had showed him the right way out of his misery, and as he was concluding his prayer with, "Oh, kind Lord, take all I possess of earthly things—my wealth, my splendour, my regal power—but give me back her whom I love," he turned around and beheld Lilian by his side, no longer a child but a fair maiden, and she said, "I have come to see if thou hast made use of the remedy."

And the king felt great joy, and all his people with him. Garm had promised half his kingdom to any one who should cure him of his sleeplessness, and as Lilian now was come back he not only offered her what was her due—half of his kingdom —but asked her also to consent to become his queen, and sit by his side on his throne. But before the nuptials were celebrated with great splendour and tournaments, Lilian asked Garm to send people to fetch her poor old mother from the furthest end of the kingdom, where she now in loneliness was awaiting the return of her daughter, "for," as Lilian said, "it is to her thou owest gratitude for the peace in thy heart, for when I was a child she often repeated, 'Don't forget to pray, Lilian dear, if thou wishest to sleep peacefully and have good and beautiful dreams.'"

The Flowers.

ALL round, like the circumference of a circle, a great garden was laid out, but you never noticed that it was round, for it was so large that no one could see how it gradually formed itself into a circle. In some places everything grew wild, in other places vast garden-beds were to be seen, where various useful vegetables grew, and long ranges of trim beds with flowers in immense variety and colours.

The sun had just risen and the flowers were awake.

"Now to enjoy life again," said the heart's-ease, which, living on the fat of the land, had grown larger and more beautiful than they had been created at first. And as they had become more refined and sought after, they had assumed a new name, to distinguish themselves from their low-bred relations, and called themselves now by the family name of "Pansy."

"There comes my sun," called out the narcissus, and turned towards him, fully convinced that it was for his sake alone that the sun rose, and shed his light over the garden.

"Now then, bask yourselves in our splendour," said the sunflowers, in the firm belief that it was they alone that lit up the day.

"Now we will put ourselves straight, and give our shiny leaves a polish," said the tiger-lilies, and looked as haughtily as if they had been the lords of the creation.

"We can scatter a golden rain," thought the laburnums, and waved with self-sufficiency their richly-hung branches.

"Now, as always, we are the nobility," said the tulips, and mirrored their gorgeous garments in the dewdrops.

"Ah, he has come at last, to curl our hair," yawned the fuchsias, when they beheld the sun.

"Those are best liked which give the most delight," said the roses.

Everywhere amongst the flower-beds was heard the same voice of self-glorification, and down where the kitchen vegetables grew it was no better.

"Our blossoms are the prettiest, and we are often transplanted to adorn the arbour in which the children play," said the scarlet-runners with pride.

"We are a family with taste, and of Norman extraction," said the French-beans, and looked down with contempt on their neighbours, the homely broad-beans.

"Our family is spread all over the world," added the potato plants. No one would admit equality, and a feeling of discord prevailed everywhere, when a little singing bird, perched upon a tree, began singing:

"From the lap of earth, their mother,
All the summer's blossoms spring;
All alike the warm sun quickens,
Buds and leaves and everything.

Outside show has only beauty
For a little passing while,
All have true and equal glory,
Blooming but in heaven's smile."

The sunflowers trembled with anger, the tulips changed colours, and the tiger-lilies straightened themselves still more when they heard the song. The pinks grew dark red, the roses broke open their buds, and the pansies looked black at the intruder.

"All alike, indeed!" cried the scarlet-runners, and eagerly clutched the prop to elevate themselves above their neighbours.

"The common kitchen vegetables my equals!" said the laburnums, and shook their branches incredulously, and so violently, that they scattered their golden treasure in anger over the ground.

"We have no equals in the world," asserted the narcissi, and began to talk about how they derived their pedigree from Narcissus himself, the conceited youth who, on looking at his reflection in a deep well, became enamoured of himself, and

was transformed into the flower which was their ancestor.

There was a terrible ado in the garden, and all the flowers felt uncomfortable, either from the effect which the little bird's singing had had upon them, or because the sun's heat was more scorching than usual. When evening came all the flowers were drooping their heads and panting with thirst, and nothing but the dew fell to refresh them.

So the days passed on, one after another, and the sun became still more scorching. All vegetable life in the garden began to wither, and many of the gorgeous flowers had to witness their beauty fading away. Sighing and moaning was heard everywhere, and no one felt the pride it had felt before.

"I only wanted you to understand that you are all equals in my eyes," said the sun, and shrouded himself behind a veil of clouds, which bestowed upon the garden a refreshing rain. But the flowers had scarcely regained their strength and beauty before they forgot their punishment, and again were eager to let everybody understand that each considered its own family to be the principal one.

A dark cloud arose one day at noon upon the horizon, and soon burst down upon the garden in a violent shower of rain, flooding the ground. With the rain descended large hailstones, which did such sad havoc in the garden that the paths and beds were strewn all over with broken flowers.

The surviving flowers shed tears, and felt the truth of the song. After a short time, when the graves had been covered, tablets of commemoration with showy inscriptions were placed on each tomb, telling to the world how the flowers had died, but did the survivors learn their lesson? If not all, let us hope that some did—and will.

A String of Pearls.

IN a dark garret, in a large town, lived a man whose name was James. He was still young, but sorrow had visited him early in life, and there were already wrinkles on his brow, for he had often known what bitter losses meant. Wealth and earthly possessions he had never owned, for he had not inherited from his parents anything but their blessing, but in the struggle of life he had lost the faith of his childhood—and faith in God and a pure heart are the most precious inheritance that we take with us from our home, when we start forth in the world.

One evening James sat at the window of his chamber, gazing over the roofs that stretched before him higgledy-piggledy, black, grey, brown, and dark red. Only sombre colours were before him,

and seemed to reflect the dark and lifeless gloom of his inner self.

Deep sighs forced their way from the very depth of his poor heart, and when at last his head sank upon his hands, bitter tears trickled down on to a sheet of paper on which were scribbled some lines, written in his happy youth, that he had been reading again that evening:

"For me life's path is never dark or dreary,
No doubts, no cares assail me on my way;
Forward I press with feet that never weary,
And hope for ever sings her glad sweet lay.

Serenest peace within my heart is dwelling,
Born of the faith I learnt in childhood's hour,
And as I roam my song is ever telling
Of faith and hope and love's divinest power."

But now the faith of his childhood was wrecked, and gloomy doubts had taken its place. The gift of song James had retained, but now his hope was ever mingled with depressing lament, and weary sad complainings. Many a night James had sat like this, but he had never felt so utterly depressed, so lonely and lost before. When after a while he looked up, and again gazed listlessly before him, his eyes were arrested by something he had not observed before. It was a pansy that peeped out from one of the cornices of the nearest building. Some mould had gathered in a crevice, and chance had carried thither on the wind a seed—that was all. But that flower meant something. It spoke of spring-time having arrived, and James

had not noticed it before, as he was gazing on the housetops. He opened the window, and felt that the air was quite warm. He looked for a tree which he knew ought to be seen far away between the roofs of the houses. There it stood, and he thought he could see that its leaves were already budding. He looked in turn at the flower, and at the tree, till at last he thought both grew taller and taller. The flower grew high as a tree, and glistened in gorgeous colours; the tree stretched forth its branches until it covered the whole city. And in the centre of the flower he saw a beautiful face, with loose flowing locks, and he heard a clear voice that whispered, "Seek, and it may be that you will find what you have lost." Suddenly it seemed to James that the leaves of the flower assumed the shape of wings, and the sweet voice came floating down to him as from the far-off distance, "Seek, and in seeking you shall find what you have lost!"

James hastened away from his close chamber, and followed in the direction whence he thought he had heard the wonderful voice that urged him on to seek. He almost ran along the streets and squares, and when at last he had left the town far behind him he sank exhausted at the side of a large stone, on the top of a little green hill, where a few young birches with their graceful airy branches and soft verdure of early spring had clustered together. Night had already spread a dark mantle over forest and field, but there was

still a glimmer, just enough for James to discern everything around him. And while he was resting here he saw something move at the foot of the hill. At first he thought it was the rising mist creeping along the hill-side, but soon he beheld the beautiful apparition of a young girl, covered with a veil, thin and lustrous, of fragile texture, as if it were woven of the silvery traces of the moon-beams. The face was the same that James had seen in the pansy, and the voice was also the same which he thought he had heard in his chamber.

The beauteous apparition pointed with a wand, twined with flowers, to the top of the hill and spoke:

"Who are you?"

"A wretched man," answered James.

"Whence do you come?"

"From a land where faith is dead."

"Whom do you seek?"

"God!"

"Then you are on the right path. When to-morrow dawns you must begin to seek Him. Go where your feeling directs you, and when you find a beautiful pearl on your way gather it up, and treasure it well, for on each pearl a letter is engraven, which will seem to you inexplicable until the moment when you meet with your last pearl, the one of azure blue. You must put them all together, and then you will discover where you shall find the goal you seek."

James passed his hands unconsciously across his eyes and the bright apparition vanished.

When he looked up he saw the rising sun lightening up the place where he sat leaning against the flat stone. His first glance lit upon a mossy fissure where a pansy lifted its bright petals towards the sun. He felt a soft yearning in his heart towards it, and said, "How sweet and beautiful you are in that lowly place, little flower!"

Then a swift glimmer of light spread o'er the flower, and James espied a pearl of bright colours, like the pansy itself. A letter was traced on the pearl, but James could not decipher it. Yet he felt that hope had returned to his bosom, and he took the pearl with him when he left the place.

Through forest and valley he wended his way during the day, and when night came he slept under the hospitable roof of the starry heavens.

At noon, one sultry day, he arrived at a small brook, gently murmuring in its onward course, and he knelt by its bank to refresh himself from its cool, clear waters. He drank out of his open hand, and when he had quenched his thirst, he said, smiling, "How happy you are, little brook, in having bestowed upon you the blessing of refreshing fatigued travellers and spreading life all around you."

Then suddenly one of the drops was transformed into a transparent pearl of the clearest crystal, and it remained in James' hand when the water had been drunk. He felt new strength infused into his veins, and placed the pearl beside the one he had found in the flower.

At peep of day, next morning early, James awoke

in a gloomy pine forest, where the tall trees rose majestically, and stood so close to one another that they formed a constant twilight, while the sunbeams sported on their dome of sombre green. James leant against a stem, and looked with delight on the ever-changing play of the sunbeam's bright flicker amongst the branches. He listened to the whispering wind, and the chirping of the birds, and felt that all spoke of grandeur and joy. "How grand and peaceful you are, ever green wood!" James said; and as he was going to continue on his road he beheld on the mossy carpet, under the tree, a pearl, dark in colour, but charged with sunny hues, which he could not explain. He took up the pearl with joy and put it with the others.

One summer day James wandered across a meadow, where the grass thickly waved on each side of him, and where myriads of insects were buzzing and bustling about amongst the grass that swayed gently in the wind. James stopped on his way and sat down to behold more closely the stirring insect world. And the more he looked at this ceaseless activity, and the ever-changing forms and colours of the insect inhabitants, the more he admired it; and whilst he was thus sitting there, he found an emerald pearl drooping from a green frond that nodded gently to and fro.

There was a storm on the sea one day when James went down to the shore to look at the raging billows that with tremendous clamour rolled onward to the shore, till they split, foaming with anger, powerless,

upon the firm, hard rocks. He seated himself on a stone besprinkled by the spray, and for every roaring wave that came James stretched forth his hands towards it. It seemed to him as if all the billows could speak, and brought messages from unknown realms. His heart yearned, and he felt himself strong and defiant, and amongst the spray that whirled on to his lap he found a pearl, dazzling white, with a dim character engraved on its smooth surface.

The sixth pearl James found when, one autumn day, he gathered ripe fruit in the orchard, and was thinking of how these blessed trees, which now bore hundreds of rosy apples, once had lain hidden in tiny kernels, that had dropped down and germinated in the earth. When James opened the fruit, there appeared a pearl of purple red, with letters traced upon it, the meaning of which James almost surmised. He looked up towards the pure sky with a grateful heart, and when he stretched forth his hands in adoration down dropped in each hand a pearl, azure blue, like the sky itself, with an engraven letter so clear and bright, that James now knew that he should find what he so long had sought. He strung them together in one brilliant string of pearls, and read the dazzling inscription :

"Creation."

James' visage reflected the heavenly revelation, and his whole being thrilled with a feeling of

unspeakable joy. He felt himself as happy as a child that tumbles about in merry sport on a green meadow. Peace dwelt again in his soul, and ebbing life flowed back again to his heart, as the thought came home to him that he now knew in what to seek the Omnipotent he so long had striven after. And when he stood thus listening to the music of the spheres, the responsive tones of his own heart burst into song, and he sang aloud the song of his youth:

"For me life's path is never dark or dreary,
No doubts, no cares assail me on my way;
Forward I press with feet that never weary,
And hope for ever sings her glad, sweet lay."

Neptune's Crown.

MANY, many thousand generations ago, Neptune was seated on his throne erected in the depths of the unfathomable ocean, and all his subjects came at times from all parts of the seas to do him homage. A whale came looming in the distance to acknowledge its insignificance, dolphins tumbled about at his feet, and innumerable flying-fishes were fanning his brow with their wings, to chase away his troubles and cares; and all that came near were mirrored in the throne, which was made of clear

crystal, and inlaid with many million gems of the purest lustre, and the throne reflected everything in its true light—the wicked appeared hideous in spite of external beauty, the righteous shone like stars, even though their forms were ever so ugly.

The God of the Seas was clad in a flowing robe of fish scales of gorgeous hue, wrought with such superior skill and care that it had taken all the dwellers of the seas more than two thousand years to complete it. Over his shoulders hung a mantle, the texture of which was interwoven with water lilies, and it was so large and flowing that its fringes floated for miles and miles on the surface of the seas. He carried a sceptre in his hand, and on his head a crown of scarlet-coloured corals, and the God of the Seas was so grand and majestic that, though the throne on which he was seated rested upon the bottom of the ocean, his crown reached far above the surface of the water, surrounded by seaweed—as people called it; but it was his long flowing hair floating up and down amongst the billows.

Neptune sat in judgment, and so he had done for many centuries, for the ways of the laws are just as crooked and slow in his realm as upon earth; but now he had resolved to rest after his long, incessant labours. He put aside his sceptre, and took with both his hands the crown from his head and placed it on his lap; but he was greatly surprised to find that it had been wonderfully transformed.

The red corals were covered with black earth, mighty forests clustered on his crown, and glorious valleys and meadows divided the forests; the woods were replete with animal life, and man had chosen the lower valleys to build his dwellings in; everything was blooming and pulsing with life, and nature smiled with eloquent signs upon Neptune, who expressed his joy, for he had never seen anything like it before, and he could not turn his eyes away from this picture which he thought so beautiful to behold.

When Neptune had looked at it as he thought for a little while—though in reality it was nearly three years—he discovered with dismay that the beautiful picture disappeared, and at last nothing more remained than naked cliffs, and whitening bones entangled in seaweed.

Then he became sorrowful in mind, and began lamenting: "That picture was the most beautiful I ever beheld! Why was I not permitted to retain it?"

He called together his whole court, and all the toilers of the seas, and commanded them to erect a column that should reach to the surface of the seas; and he gave his own throne as a foundation.

The structure was soon completed, and the God of the Seas placed uppermost his crown, after first having adorned it with grains of gold and diamonds.

Once in a thousand years Neptune is allowed to raise his head above the surface of the seas to look at the sun as he sinks in immensity; but he had

never benefited by this permission, for he had always thought there was nothing more beautiful than his own realm. But, now, he was longing for the hour when he might behold his work, but as the appointed day had recently passed, he had to wait another thousand years.

But for the God of the Seas a thousand years is not a very long period, so the time had soon arrived. The appointed day came, and Neptune took his harp with him, to sing himself a lay in glorification of his work; after which he, full of joy, rose above the surface of the sea, and saw that his crown had become even more beautiful than before, and still more peopled. Large vessels floated to its shores, and handsome cities were scattered all round the coast; but both from city and land rose a dismal yell, which dismayed him.

The God of the Seas approached nearer and beheld with horror how men killed each other, and struggled for the gold which he had scattered over his crown only to adorn it. Brother fought against brother, father against son, everywhere blasphemy and curses were mingled with the groans of the dying; there were awful miseries and constant sufferings, and all for the sake of the gold.

It roused his anger to see his work spoiled, so he flung his harp in wrath against the crown, and many vessels were by that tossed up on the cliffs and wrecked. His breath panted with fury, and created a hurricane, so that the sea raged madly around the crown, and he caught with both

his hands the structure to bury his work in the deep. But the pillar remained firm, and could not be moved; notwithstanding his exertions, only a few towns were shattered, and in their fall killed some thousands of people: but what mattered that amongst so many millions? The survivors threw themselves with greediness on the chattels of the dead, and misery became greater than ever.

Then the God of the Seas wept bitter tears, and returned to his realm, where since that time he has been bewailing that ever he adorned his crown with gold and jewels.

King Osman's Friends.

KING OSMAN was a kind and gentle monarch, who loved his people as if they were his children, and he was a happy prince, who might be envied, for surely no mortal ever possessed so many friends as he did. His subjects called him their friend and brother; every one had vowed to him

friendship unto death,—all, except an old beggar, who every day was seated at the gate of the palace, and received alms every time the king went out.

The old beggar had not given any promise, for he said, "Of what use to a king is the friendship of so humble a man as I am?"

It seemed to the courtiers that the old man was in the right, but still they wanted to turn him away, so that the king might not every day behold the ragged beggar; but the king took his part, and the old man was allowed to remain in peace in his seat on the granite steps, and every time Osman passed the old beggar used to fall down and kiss the hem of his robe.

One day a message came to Osman telling him that his enemies had made a descent upon the coasts of his kingdom, and that all the best merchant vessels had been seized by a prince who reigned on the other side of the sea.

Enraged at this, Osman gathered together his warriors, and gave orders that the great fleet, which lay in readiness on the river, should be instantly prepared to put to sea.

Maltos, the prime minister, a man whom the king had raised from obscurity to the highest functions in the realm, was invested with the government in the king's absence.

Osman had condescended even so far as to elect his favourite's only child, the beauteous Zirma, to become his future queen; and to this man, "the king's faithful and best friend," as he styled himself,

was confided the welfare of the realm while the king was away.

Osman kissed his betrothed, who wept and assured him that her love would never change, after which the king and all his warriors embarked in the fleet. The whole populace were gathered on the banks, shedding tears, and Maltos was so distressed that he rolled himself on the ground, tore his clothes, and cried loudly in his grief and regret.

Alone on the granite steps the old beggar knelt and prayed that heaven would grant the king a prosperous voyage.

A long time elapsed without any news from the king, and the people began to fear that he and his warriors had fallen by the enemies' swords, or been engulfed in the stormy sea.

One day a man clad all in rags came to the city gates and asked to be let in, for he was the bearer of important news from the king.

The guard refused to admit such a ragged man, and threatened even to strike him with his halberd, saying, "My friend the king is a great and mighty lord, and does not send beggars as his messengers."

"Well, then, let in your friend the king! I am returning wretched and poor, since my enemies have vanquished me, and my own warriors abandoned me and chosen a new king," said the beggar, and raised his head, and lo! it was really King Osman.

The soldier considered for a moment, then answered, "As you are no longer our king, you

have no business here, so I would advise you to depart pretty quick."

"But am I not your friend?" resumed Osman.

"What is the use of a beggar's friendship," said the soldier sharply, and closed the wicket gate in his face.

"This one was the first friend I met," sighed Osman, "but I will try to console myself, for the officials of the government, and all my wealthy citizens, whose good fortune I have always sought to further, will be sure to receive their friend in a better way than this."

Osman stayed outside the town until evening came, and then he secretly went to a part of the city wall where there was a possibility of climbing in. When he got safely on the other side of it he found himself in a garden belonging to one of the most opulent citizens. The light that glimmered through the lofty windows of the mansion was only partially hidden by the foliage of the myrtle groves, and he could see that a number of persons were moving to and fro in the festive halls.

"He is giving a feast," thought Osman; "many of my friends will be there, and I will implore their help."

Osman wended his steps between the flower beds until he reached the grand entrance, which was gorgeously illuminated. There was no one to prevent him, so he ascended the staircase fearlessly, and entered the hall amongst the illustrious throng, greeting them joyously with, "Peace be with you, my friends!"

At the sight of him all became hushed and silent in the hall, and all eyes turned to the unbidden guest, and then each man furtively glanced to his neighbour's face. All had at once recognized their friend the king in spite of his ragged dress, but no one approached him, no one gave him his hand, no one bid him welcome.

"Do you not recognize your friend?" Osman resumed, advancing; but everybody retreated a little.

"When I left you, you shed tears, and professed friendship until death; now I need your friendship, for I return to you a poor and wretched fugitive. My warriors have chosen a new king, and I was forced to make my escape to save my life. You have all professed that you owe your lives and possessions to your royal friend, and I sincerely believe that you will assist me. Save my life, and hide me from my foes, who already are sailing up the river, and who will soon be here."

There was a moment's silence, after which the host stepped forth and said, "My dear friend, we would all have been willing to sacrifice life and blood for you, but we dare not incur the displeasure of our new king, so the best you can do is to fly the realm, and hide where your enemies cannot find you. None of us will mention that you have been here, and all our good wishes will accompany you on your road."

"Yes, our good wishes!" everybody agreed.

"But a shelter for the night, and one of your

vessels to effect my escape with; neither, I am sure, you will deny me?"

"My dear friend, we will sacrifice everything for you, but the displeasure of our new king . . . . ."

Instead of the guests shunning the king, as at first, they now all crowded round him, and with many protestations of what they "would do," politely hustled the poor king out at the door, which the host instantly barred and locked, and after this the dancing and mirth became more uproarious even than it had been before.

Osman sighed deeply on reaching the garden, and said, "Far better was the watchman's open confession, 'What is the use of a beggar's friendship?' than these fawning hypocrites, who with lying professions of friendship drive me away from their noisy feast."

Osman left the garden and soon reached Maltos' palace. He ascended the spacious marble stairs and entered the hall, where Maltos was seated, and by him Zirma.

"You, my Zirma, and you, my best, my faithful friend!" the king called out, and opened his arms for both, and soon they were both folded in his loving embrace.

Osman then told them the same story which he had told his friends at the banquet, and added that he was proclaimed an outlaw, and that the new king had promised that any one who delivered the head of the fugitive should be made his prime minister, and be granted beside any other reward of his own choice.

Maltos offered him protection, and immediately had a splendid bedroom arranged for his friend the king, who said good night to his betrothed, and retired to his chamber, to the threshold of which he was accompanied by Maltos, who solemnly protested that with him he was safe, and that he would rather give his own life than that a hair on the head of his royal friend should be touched.

Osman was very tired, and threw himself as he was on the bed, and fell asleep immediately. He awoke in the middle of the night, and as sleep refused to close his eyelids, he arose and went to the window, to inhale the cool balmy air from the garden.

"I thank Heaven that my beloved ones have remained faithful to me," said Osman, and knelt down to pray for his true friends; but at this moment he was interrupted by the door being softly opened. He listened with astonishment to the whispering voices of Maltos and Zirma, but his surprise was changed to horror when he heard their words.

"Do not fear, daughter; the point of the dagger is poisoned, and he will die without even stirring," whispered Maltos.

"But, father, he loved me so tenderly."

"Console yourself, for the reward is to be chosen by myself; I shall claim that the new king makes you his bride, though I dare say he will do that without my asking, as you are so be tiful."

"Well, proceed then, father; but do it quickly, so that he may not suffer."

A cold perspiration burst out on Osman's brow as he listened to these words, but he had enough presence of mind to keep quiet behind the curtains of the window, and where he stood shrouded in the darkness. In a few moments the blow was struck, after which Maltos and Zirma stole away, and fastened the door securely. The king felt for the dagger, and found that it was thrust to the very hilt into the bedclothes.

"And he—he too!" Osman sighed, and tears trickled down his cheeks.

Having collected himself a little after this occurrence, he leaped down from the window into the garden, which was partly hemmed in by the city wall; and he was just about to climb over it when he saw a light glimmer in a wretched hovel close by.

"Which of my friends can this be dwelling in such a miserable place, and up so late?" Osman thought, and went noiselessly to the window to look. He found it was the old beggar who would not promise him his friendship.

Osman knocked at the door, and the old man opened it immediately.

"Peace be with you, old man!" Osman greeted him. "I saw you in your hut, and resolved to enter, now in my turn to ask for *your* charity, for now I am even poorer than you, and besides, I am pursued by my enemies who seek my life."

When the old man saw that it was the king he fell down on his knees and kissed the hem of his garment, though it was more ragged even than his own.

"My beloved king, all you see here is yours; all, except a treasure which I have long hidden from the world."

"What! do you possess a treasure?" inquired Osman. "I should like to behold it."

"Stay, my king, and I will show it you." The old beggar went into an inner room, and returned immediately, leading by the hand a young girl, who was so beautiful that the blush of dawn grew pale by her side, and the stars looked dim compared with her eyes, as she raised them towards Osman.

"Fall on your knees before your king," said the old man, and the girl knelt before the king, but he raised her gently, saying:

"Were I still king you should sit by my side as my queen. I thank you, old man, but I will not take advantage of your kindness, for I am an outlaw, and whoever receives me in his house will forfeit his life; so farewell!"

"Stay, my king! where I have hidden my treasure from the eyes of the world, there will I also hide you, and guard the threshold. Yes, to shelter you will I sacrifice my life, and even that of my innocent child."

"We will meet again, my friend," Osman answered; "take your child with you, and come down to the

banks of the river to-morrow when the sun is high in the heavens." When Osman had said this, he suddenly left the hut and climbed the city wall.

The morning dawned, and the population of the city, and of all the country round had gathered on the river banks to receive the new king, for a rumour had spread early that morning that he would arrive the same day.

Foremost amongst all stood Maltos, and by his side stood the fair Zirma. He looked triumphant as he held in his hand the key of the room, which he thought contained the dead body of the former king.

When the sun was high in the heavens the old beggar arrived, leading his daughter by the hand, and they placed themselves behind all the others.

In obedience to his king he had brought his treasure, which he had hitherto concealed from the eyes of the world; nor did any one see her now, for all eyes looked down the river, where the new king's galleys were seen proudly approaching.

And on the prow of the foremost vessel stood the king, clad in golden armour, and with an unsheathed sword in his hand. But, lo! it was not a new king, it was the same who had once departed bemoaned and blessed by his friends on land!

He had only wanted to test their friendship, and so he had come poor and wretched before he returned rich and mighty.

When Maltos saw him, he fell trembling on his knees, and Zirma sank to the ground like a broken

lily; and the friends who had driven him from their feast stood trembling and with downcast eyes. All was silent as the grave, only the voice of the old beggar was heard calling out, "Welcome, my king, welcome!"

When the ships touched the banks the warriors on one of them disembarked, and ranged themselves in two files in front of the king's galley awaiting his commands.

The king looked severely, but yet sorrowfully at the multitude, and a deep sigh stole from the depth of his heart before he raised his voice: "You, Maltos, called yourself 'the best and most faithful friend of the king,' and yet you would have plunged a dagger into his heart. You, Zirma, promised to love me as long as your heart beat, and yet you abandoned me for another. All ye, who yesterday revelled at the feast, had vowed to me friendship to the death, and yet ye drove me like a dog away. Now all of ye ascend that vessel!"

The warriors seized Maltos and Zirma, and all those who had driven the king from the feast, and brought them on board the vessel, which was pushed out without a rudder to follow the current of the river to the sea, where the faithless friends soon afterwards perished together in the stormy waves.

And the king again raised his voice and said, "You who would not promise me friendship, but who still would sacrifice everything for me, come here and sit on my right hand; and the treasure which you have hidden from the eyes of the world, give that

to me! I clasp your child to my heart as my chosen queen."

And the warriors lifted up on their shields the old beggar and bore his treasure to the side of the king, who first embraced the old man, and then pressed his blushing bride to his heart.

A flourish of trumpets greeted the young queen, and deafening cheers from the brave warriors again and again shook the air.

When the flourish of trumpets had ceased, the king raised high his sword, and spoke to the people thus: "All ye who are now gathered on the banks, take back the lavish friendship that ye once protested, kneel down and give your oath of fealty and obedience to your '*Ruler* and *Lord!*'"

The Brook.

THE sun shone on the mountain tops, and the snow was melting away. The waters gathered in a cavity of the rocks, and when the mountain springs were overflowing, the little brook leaped into existence. It threw itself with merry sport down amongst the rocks and stones, and sprinkled silver drops upon the heather, which looked up bewildered at the dashing stranger.

When the brook got further down into the valley it became broad and deep, and so transparent that

what lay at its bottom was clearly to be seen. A little lad came to the banks and threw a ship on the water and ran by its side, greeting with exultation every turn which the little skiff made in the whirlpools. But suddenly the brook made an abrupt turn, and, as it were, hid itself in the moss. The little boat was lost, and the lad returned home; but the brook continued its journey, and felt itself rather dejected by reason of new and strange surroundings. Tall trees ranged themselves on each side, and shrubs with coarse foliage bent over and mirrored themselves in the water.

"Where am I? where am I?" murmured the brook.

"In the glorious woods," chirruped the birds.

Dreamingly did the brook wend its way amongst the meadows, kissing the feet of flowers and trees, which all whispered "thanks!" in return, and should so have liked to ask it to linger, but they knew full well it would not do so, for "onward! onward!" pressed the yearning spirit of the brook.

All at once the view enlarged, the arch of the azure sky expanded, and by this time the brook had arrived at a beautiful garden, where it gracefully meandered among flower beds of gorgeous colours, breathing a fragrant welcome to it. Down to the banks came a beautiful maiden with flaxen curls, and at her approach the brook almost stopped its course. The water sank into a quiet meditation of her beauty. No whirlpools, no ripple disturbed its placid surface. Then the brook gallantly acted the

part of a looking-glass, and the maiden accepted the offer, and viewed her beautiful face reflected there. "I will keep your image for ever!" thought the brook, and when the maiden leant down and took its clear water in her hands and brought it to her lips, the brook yearned, "Oh, I will stay here by your side for ever!" But then the irresistible desire of roaming urged it onward, and the garden and girl with the flaxen hair were left far behind. Its onward course became more rough and turbulent. Loud and clamorous it dashed madly along, and grew more bold and impetuous every moment. Raging and foaming it swept over its banks, and whenever an obstacle dared to oppose its course it leaped victoriously over it.

Then an earnest-looking man appeared on its banks looking across the foaming water.

"All right, go ahead! I will make use of you. It is not a bit too early for you to learn to work," said the earnest-looking man, and brought the brook into the channel of a flour-mill, where it was made to turn the big wheel. "Yes, you may groan; but work you must," said the miller, after which he allowed the brook to pass on.

Many little brothers and sisters of the brook-family it met on its way—young tributaries of the same broad river into which they now all at last were merged—moving majestically between the widening banks. Vessels and boats were carried along—"these are my thoughts that I will carry forth into the world!"—and the further it coursed, the larger

and more splendid were the vessels that it floated. It felt happy that it was so mighty and deep, that it could carry rich cargoes to distant lands, where it knew it would cease to exist as a brook, but where it felt it still would continue to live!

One evening, when the sun sank in the glory of its setting, the river no longer lingered amongst the woods and fields as it had hitherto done. An immeasurable expanse of golden splendour spread to the horizon. "This must be the ocean!" thought the river, and felt itself on the instant dissolving into the unfathomable eternal element. It no longer of itself carried the big vessels with their white swelling canvas, but as a surging wave accompanied them, and rolling along to a distant unknown bourn, rejoiced that it brought something with it on the long journey to eternity.

The Temple of Truth.

ENGROSSED in bitter thoughts, outside of a poor cottage, alone and abandoned, sat little Dan, and wept bitterly, for his father and mother were both dead, and without guidance and protection he was now to go abroad, into the wide world. Sorrowful in mind, he wended his way across the mountains to seek his fortune far away from his old home, and as he wandered alone the sun crept down and hid behind the forest, and night flew abroad on its broad black wings, far above, amongst the mountain tops.

The crossing paths were bewildering, and soon the little lad lost his way. Tired and weary he sat himself down on a mossy stone, and tears forced

themselves down his cheeks, but when they ceased his eyes closed in sleep, and his curly head rested against the hard stone for a pillow.

Then Dan fancied that the mountain opened behind him, and that he was gradually drawn into its embrace. Above his head darkness closed in, but as he slowly sank all became luminous and bright, and when he opened his eyes he found himself standing in a great hall, where floor and roof glistened with the treasures of bright ores and gems. All around the great hall, up and down, to and fro, glimmered many thousand flames, of which some radiated like bright stars, others more dimly; nothing of life appeared, save these glancing, flickering flames.

And a voice, as if of a thousand voices in one, vibrated in the air, and was re-echoed from all sides of the great hall: "The flames that thou beholdest here are the spirits of truth, that long to be set free, but they cannot disperse among the people of the earth before the way to the Temple of Truth has been found. Upon earth there are many roads that cross each other, but if thou have a stout heart, follow the path that leads to the Temple of Truth. Great obstacles will rise on thy way, thou wilt falter many a time, but only take heart again, and persevere steadily, and thou wilt gain release and freedom for us all."

At this time a star glimmered more intensely than all the others, and, as it were, beckoned the little lad to follow it.

"Here thou seest your guiding-star, which thou must follow, if thou wish to reach the glorious goal!" called out again the vibrating voice, and then the echoes gradually died away, and all was silent. Dan closed his eyes for fear, and found himself borne aloft again. Below him the darkness increased rapidly, but above him shone a bright light, and when he opened his eyes he felt the rising sun bathing his temples, and heard the early matin song of the birds down in the valley. He first looked around, but when he glanced at himself he found that he had grown into a strong youth, glowing with ardour, and resolved to try and reach the Temple of Truth. He descended into the valley amongst the people, but when he trod the uneven and slippery path people laughed at him: he heeded it not, but continued on his way, though even at his very first steps he trod on thorns, and these increased the further he advanced. Far in the distance glimmered his guiding-star, but when Dan hastened to follow its bright beckoning light, soft siren tones stole upon his ear from the wayside, and when for a little while he followed the enticing music, he soon found that he had lost his way in the wild forests, and entangled himself in a thicket so overgrown and impenetrable that he could not extricate himself. Nauseous ferns with sharp-edged leaves cut his arms, and thorny brambles caught him by the hair.

And behind him siren voices whispered, "There is no such thing as truth!"

"Do as we do: doubt everything, and enjoy life."

"Turn and follow us, and join in our merry sports and pleasures."

Dan saw graceful forms approach, tempting him with cool delicious drinks to quench his burning thirst, but when he stretched forth his hands to reach the goblets, the flitting forms moved away and said, "You must first swear to give up your purpose and follow us. Make only a promise and we will set you free."

Dan fought long with the fell powers that would make him swerve from his right path; but all of a sudden he saw his bright star twinkle amongst the forest trees, and he thought he heard the vibrating voice that urged him on, "Thou wilt falter many a time, but only take heart again, and persevere steadily, and thou wilt gain release and freedom for us all." A giant's power coursed through his limbs, and he tore asunder the entanglements of the siren powers of unbelief, and followed his guiding-star.

Dan felt now that he had become a man, and he walked onward with firm steps. He came to a broad river that majestically rolled onward between its hilly banks. Far away, beyond the opposite bank, glimmered the guiding-star, but it lit upon a barren desert, at the sight of which Dan's heart shrank in fear, and he stopped a few moments to rest himself on the banks of the river. He saw many vessels rapidly pass

down it with the tide, and many of the ships were splendidly equipped, and carried cargoes of great value. One of them steered to the bank where Dan sat. Flags and streamers waved from mast and rigging, and the deck was inlaid with gold. When the vessel had approached so near to Dan that he with ease could step on board, a hand was stretched forth over the railings, and a girl with a smiling, lovely countenance nodded and said, "We have been waiting for you to step on board; the vessel belongs to you, and will bear you to a land of riches and delights. But hasten, before the tide carries us away from you."

Dan looked wistfully at the soft cushions spread on deck, and his weary limbs longed to rest on them, but at the same time a thought of the Temple of Truth flashed upon his mind, and he called out, "My road lies not *down* the river but across, and through its deep waters to the other shore, where my beacon-light is the star of truth."

And the vessel disappeared, and the star shone brighter than ever, when Dan threw himself into the river, and lustily stemmed the billows, until he reached the opposite bank.

He wandered through the desert and came at last to a steep mountain that barred all further progress. Up above shone the bright star, but when Dan beheld the insurmountable barrier he sighed deeply, and stood still. Then he discovered to the left of him a broad stair hewn out in granite. A great

throng of people were ascending the stairs, over the top of which floated beautiful phantoms in the air, which sang:

"Would you climb to honour?
This the easy way.
Yours shall be the glory
Of dominion's sway."

Then awoke a burning desire in Dan's soul. Here was an easy way of getting to the top at once, and he would no longer need to walk, alone and neglected, by a toilsome path. He looked upward along the stairs, and thought he could see the gates of a gorgeous palace upon the heights.

"See the gates of glory
Opened for you now,
Wreaths of laurel waiting
To entwine your brow!"

Nearer and nearer the siren's song was wafted to him.

"Why should I hesitate any longer?" he said, enraptured; but as he was about to take the first step towards the stair, his whole past life rushed before his mind, and he remembered the promises he had made in his youth.

"No, no!" he cried out; "I will follow thee, beautiful star, to my death!"

And when he looked up to the steep mountain he saw his own star shedding such a bright lustre that it lit up every fissure, and the smallest tuft of grass or flower could be clearly seen up to the highest point. Dan commenced with renewed

strength and courage to ascend the craggy path, but when he reached half-way he was compelled, panting with exertion, to rest by the side of a small spring which poured forth from amongst the stones, and gathered in a small natural basin. He leant down to drink, and beheld in the calm mirror of the spring the head of an old man with flowing white hair.

"So aged already! Then I must make haste!" he called out, and commenced anew to climb the mountain, clinging to the shrubs with tremulous hands. Arrived nearly at the top, he could no longer walk, but dragged himself along, never taking his eyes away from the star, which ever spread out into more and more dazzling and beautiful lights before him.

At last Dan had reached the platform of the summit, and on a projecting eminence quite near he beheld a glorious temple, from the interior of which a dazzling light poured forth. It was the Temple of Truth, the goal of the wanderer; but he was so exhausted that he could not even drag himself to the entrance. Then once more the voices from the brambles, from the river, and from the broad stairs reached him, and they said in mocking unison, "Where is, then, the reward of all your labours when you cannot enter now?"

Dan raised his weary eyes, and with a faint smile upon his lips he replied, "I have first trodden the path; others will follow in my steps—that is enough reward for me!" And now he felt that

his soul had become freed from the imprisonment of flesh, and he heard again the voice of the olden days pealing forth as of a thousand voices in one, and proclaiming, "The hour of deliverance has come!"

And now the liberated spirits of truth gathered round him, and carried Dan into the temple, where he himself became a bright star, guiding on the right path all those who journey toward the Temple of Truth.

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